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THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

**AUGUST 2021** 





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Page 7



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GARDENS DOES
WELL FOR THE
NOOK

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## It's Freedom Day!

I write this on Monday 19th July, as the sun streams in through my window, and my phone buzzes to let me know that Covid-19 restrictions are lifting all across the country. I scroll through my diary for August, September and October, and I spot a few things. A family holiday here, a bit of quiet and retreat time there, and otherwise... not very much. Three inviting months of extended leave. 90 freedom days in a row!

I am not writing any of this to make anyone cross, although sometimes you succeed by accident. I am doing it because like you, I know that freedom isn't quite as clear as that. I don't know what things are like 2 weeks from here as you read this, but on

Freedom Day there is a lot of concern about growing virus numbers, and whether we should all give up wearing masks, social distancing, and all the other things which have become part of life through the last year.

It's similar with my sabbatical. Amongst the various other things that the Church of England doesn't allow me three months' leave from are doing jobs around the house, being the Dad Taxi, or (and somehow this is worst of all) making packed lunches.

Hopefully when we grow into an adult, you see, we discover that freedom is about more than just doing what I want. I have the choice to limit my freedom for the sake of someone else; I might hate wearing a mask, but if my friend is really worried about meeting me without one on, hopefully I will put him first. There might be something a bit annoying about making sandwiches in the evening, but I love my children enough not to want them to go hungry.

I suppose when you think about Christianity you might imagine it as a big long list of things you can't do. A whole load of ways that your freedom is reduced, lots of them a lot more annoying than packed lunches.

But in the end, I don't follow a list. I follow a person, Jesus.

I have a relationship with Jesus, and just like I would wear a mask if my friend asked to put them first, I am going to do what he asks and put him first. I have a relationship with Jesus, and just like I am not going to give up doing things for my children because I don't want to let them down, I am not going to give up on doing things for him, because I don't want to let him down. I have freedom to choose to do those things for him, and those things are what I choose to do. And first of all I remember everything that he has done for me.

I won't be doing church jobs for a few months, but I'll still be following Jesus, and I'll still be looking forward to seeing you at school, and in the street. Maybe we'll end up talking about what it might mean for you to follow him as well.



### **CHURCHWARDENS**

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#### FROM THE REGISTERS

#### **BURIAL OF ASHES**

MARGUERITE ANGELA HARBORD and ERIC FRED HARBORD 13th July at Stoke Holy Cross

#### **WEDDING**

ADAM STEPHEN FROST and

RACHAEL JANE KING

17th July at Stoke Holy Cross

We continue to pray for all those who have lost loved ones recently, or are remembering someone particularly at this time of year.

### **CURATE**

Lyn Marsh, 8 Mill Green, Stoke Holy Cross, NR14 8PB Lyn@venta-group.org **01508 493422** 

### **ADMINISTRATOR**

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Search Facebook and Youtube for "Venta group of churches" www.venta-group.org

### **NEXT EDITION**

Items for the next month's magazine please send by email to Henry and Eostre Caswell by email to ventafree4all@outlook.com
By 10th of this month please.
The 10th of the month will be the deadline for all copy for the next magazine for the time being.

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## Curate's Egg Article by Lyn

have been fortunate to have had a holiday this summer, a week away from home and in another country, in Wales. It was a lovely cottage in a Pembrokeshire village, Manorbier, a few miles from Tenby. I had never been to the area before and so took particular attention to the places we visited and the streets we walked. Walking through Tenby a pub caught my attention, not because it was a pub(!) but it's name – the Hope and Anchor. It was just a little way up from the harbour and many people would have walked past it, not just tourists or holidaymakers but fishermen through the ages.

Hope and Anchor. Where is our hope? What do we anchor to? It was a beautifully sunny day as we walked past, people were enjoying a meal in the shaded outside seating area of the pub – a familiar sight across the United Kingdom since restrictions were lifted – and others were walking eagerly past to get to the beach and the expectation of sitting and relaxing in the sun. What did all these people hope for? What were they anchored to?

Selfishly I was hoping for good weather when we were on holiday so that I could relax and sit on the beaches I had seen photos of. And we got it, for which I am thankful. But the weather is not reliable. We can hope (and pray) it's the type of weather that meets our desires but we can't anchor our life on it, we can't rely on it (particularly not in this country). I am reminded though of an old hymn which speaks of where our hope can be placed and who we can anchor to whatever the storms in life – Jesus. It's interesting that in the pub's name hope comes before anchor. Just as hope in Jesus then leads to us having an anchor. If you're fortunate to have a holiday and you see a Hope and Anchor pub, may you think about what your hope is in and whether you have a reliable anchor in life. And if you're staying local this month, have a drink and think am I thirsty, do I need hope and an anchor in my life? The bible offers an invitation:

Come, all you who are thirsty,

and you who have no money,

come, buy and eat!

come to the waters;

Come, buy wine and milk

without money and without cost.

2 Why spend money on what is not bread,

and your labour on what does not satisfy?

Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good,

and you will delight in the richest of fare.

3 Give ear and come to me;

listen, that you may live.



hese are words Jesus echoed for he offers live giving water to the thirsty, those looking for more to life now and in the future. If your life is dry turn to the real publican, Jesus, for hope and an anchor. Say, Jesus I am thirsty; I need hope and an anchor in life and I turn to you. Amen

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life, When the clouds unfold their wings of strife? When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain, Will your anchor drift or firm remain?

We have an anchor that keeps the soul Steadfast and sure while the billows roll, Fastened to the Rock which cannot move, Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love.

It is safely moored, 'twill the storm withstand, For 'tis well secured by the Saviour's hand; And the cables passed from His heart to mine, Can defy the blast, through strength divine.

It will firmly hold in the straits of fear,
When the breakers have told the reef is near;
Though the tempest rave and the wild winds blow,
Not an angry wave shall our bark o'erflow.

It will surely hold in the floods of death, When the waters cold chill our latest breath; On the rising tide it can never fail, While our hopes abide within the veil.

Will your eyes behold through the morning light the city of gold and the harbour bright? Will you anchor safe by the heavenly shore, when life's storms are past for evermore?

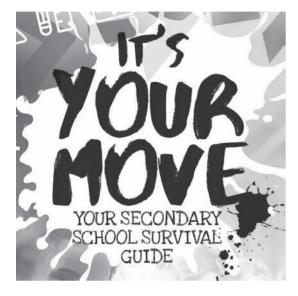
Author: Priscilla J Owens

## Reflections from Stoke Primary School Year 6

ary (who is working with us from Youth for Christ) and Lyn went and shared an afternoon with Year 6 at Stoke School recently, talking about the big move to high school. They gave all Year 6 children an 'It's Your Move' book to help them think about what the next step will be like.

'We'd like to say a big thank you to them for all the time we have spent with them over the last seven years, and we look forward to keeping seeing lots of them around the villages, even if they might be in a different school uniform! God bless you all in the exciting year ahead!'

Lyn, Rob and Gary



Below are just some of the great responses by year 6.

look forward to seeing the rest next month.

I am looking forward to moving to Wymondham High. I have only been at Stoke for 2 years and even though one of them has been taken up because of the Covid-19 pandemic, I have still had many different challenges. There is lots at Stoke going anywhere from school plays to music festivals. But overall I am excited to move on to high school.

I am looking forward to moving to high school as I'll be able to learn new things. I'm also going to enjoy making new friends although I will miss my friends here at Stoke Holy Cross Primary School. I have enjoyed my time here at Stoke and will miss it.

I am looking forward to meeting new people at high school and being able to experience more in-depth lessons. However, moving to Framingham Earl High School will be leaving behind the primary school. It has been lovely making happy memories at Stoke, and I will be upset to leave it.

I am really excited about moving to high school but then I will be leaving all of my memories here at Stoke. After my transition day yesterday, Fram looks so fun but I will be very sad when I leave.

I will definitely miss Stoke and all of its staff and students but I am really looking forward to high school and all the responsibilities it holds.

I am really excited about moving on to Fram and I am not at all sad about leaving Stoke. I am excited about making new friends and not sad about leaving friends behind because I have a phone.

I've really enjoyed my time in primary school because everyone is really nice and so are all the teachers. I'm excited for Fram because we get to meet new people and new teachers. I'll be very sad when I leave Stoke because of all the friends I've made.

I have been looking forward to starting high school because it is an opportunity to make new friends. In high school I am looking forward to learning more about history because I find it interesting learning about the past. I will also miss primary school because some of my friends are going to a different school to me.

I am excited to move to high school because I can make lots of new friends but I will leave lots of memories behind from Stoke and leave a couple of friends as they are going to different schools.

I am really excited about moving to high school because I'll meet lots of people and have a bigger range of lessons. But I'm also sad about leaving primary school because I'll have to leave some of my friends behind.

I am looking forward to moving to high school but I feel upset that I have to leave all my memories at Stoke behind. Also, I am excited to move to a larger school with people I do not know well, but I hate the thought of never coming back.



## The School Governors visit to Stoke Holy Cross Primary School

Like all in the education sector, Stoke Holy Cross Primary School has been impacted by the pandemic. The governors of the school have missed the opportunity to see the school in operation over the last year but were pleased to be invited by the Headteacher on 22 June to join in a normal school day. Here are some of the governor comments on their day:

Cassie says she arrived at school at 1:45 pm and visited foundation. The children were outside practising for sports day. Foundation class were having a lovely time racing against each other and the adults in the class. During the lesson I helped to set up the potato race. I was keen to support the children so after PE I heard some readers. It was an enjoyable afternoon.



Andy writes, "it was a pleasure to meet staff and pupils from both the Upper and Lower school during the visit. In particular, I was very impressed by the confidence and enthusiasm of the members of the School Council. They spoke with delight about their input into the 'Pyjama Day', showing me a presentation about the event and the charities supported by the initiative. It was excellent to see the positive interactions between staff and pupils out on the field at lunch and break time and the opportunities afforded to the pupils through the new land at the rear of the school. I was very impressed by the dedicated teachers and support staff that I met in the classroom as well as those who talked about their learning and read to me from Year 2! Thank you.

Antonio is our newest governor and says it was a great experience for him, and it helped to put into perspective how the school policies are being put in place and adhered to. He felt the day went very well, the behaviour management was outstanding, everything seemed to go organically without a regimented approach. The children were very familiar with behaviour policies in class and outdoor. It was great to see the teachers playing in the field with the children during break time. It certainly enhances the relationship teacher/pupil. Health and safety measures seemed to be adhered to at all time while he was on the premises. All on all, he felt the school is in good position and moving in the right direction. Kudos to Miss Chaney and her team.

Finally for me, I thoroughly enjoyed spending the day with year 4, walking the daily mile, hearing some readers, joining in a Maths lesson and learning about the Vikings. The children were well behaved and happy. It was nice to see how they worked together at the end of the day to tidy up the classroom.

Much has been written in the media of the adverse effect the pandemic has had on the younger generations education however, I am confident that all the staff at Stoke Holy Cross Primary School know the challenges their children have faced and are seeking to help them get back into learning not just core curriculum subjects but to address social and wellbeing issues that have also arisen. My hope and prayer is that the next academic year will be a more stable time for staff and pupils at the school and of course parents.

Revolyn Marsh Chair of Governors

# Help needed to plant 9,000 crocus bulbs in Stoke Holy Cross

nn Murphy has great plans to plant 9,000 (yes that is nine thousand) Crocus bulbs in memory of her late husband Brian. The idea is that bulbs will be planted around the bus shelter at the bottom of Long Lane in the heart of the village. This will provide some lovely Spring colour in that area.

As Ann plans to plant this large amount she really will need some help.

Can you volunteer on a Sat or Sun at the end of September and/or the beginning of October. If you would like to be involved please contact Ann on 01508 492768 And Ann has promised that refreshments provided.

It will be a lovely opportunity to come together as a community so do please see if you join.



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## **AUGUST 2021**

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IN OUR VILLAGE CHURCHES

### **Stoke Holy Cross Services**

Every Sunday | 10.30am | in person

You are welcome to join us in person for Sunday worship. We celebrate communion every other week and will have family friendly services in August instead of separate Lighthouse family sessions.

### **Caistor Services**

1st August | 9.30am | Praise and Worship 15th August | 9.00am | Holy Communion

### **Morning Praver on Zoom**

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We are looking forward to gather with you in August and especially excited to have a week of outdoor services and prayers at Dunston! Please keep checking our website and Facebook for details for all events. It's a little tricky to be certain at the moment as you know.

Caistor church is open from 10-4 on Wed & Sun.

Please get in touch if we can help you in any way.

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Sat 7 August | 10am | Celtic Prayer

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## Stoke Holy Cross Open gardens weekend 2021

espite the difficult past year and uncertainty about lifting of restrictions we managed to hold the SHX open gardens weekend again at the end of June and it was lovely to see so many people out and about once again. There were 10 beautiful gardens and the allotments to see as well as several plant sales and live music in the gardens from a recorder group and our local accordionist, Alan Sissons in his garden.

We were blessed with perfect garden viewing weather and over 400 people visited from as far afield as Brundall and Wisbech!

Over the 2 days we raised £2250 for EACH, the Nook, despite not being able to sell refreshments due to continuing COVID restrictions.

All the gardeners had been working so hard to ensure the gardens were looking wonderful and I think we were all pleased to finally be able to share them with all the visitors

I would like to thank all those who so kindly opened their gardens and allotments, all the helpers on the day selling programmes and maps and Starkings & Watson Estate Agents for printing all the programmes. Anna.



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