

FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS

FORDINGBRIDGE AND RINGWOOD PARISH MAGAZINE

In This Edition:

- Fr Paul says.....
- Poetry Please (A E Housman)
- Reading Recommendations (Penny Sharp and Chris Basham)
- Synod (Chris Basham and Fr Paul)
- A New Year, a New Life (David Saunders)
- Catholic Chapels of Standlynch and Downton (John Elliott)
- St David (Barbara Geatril)
- Fabulous Forest: Forest Law (Chris Basham)
- Parish Walk (Stephanie Bartel)
- Gardeners' Corner (Barbara Geatril)
- Cookery Corner (Janet Arden)
- A Mournful Task (Penny Sharp)
- A Day in Venice (Josie Musselwhite)
- Theatre Visits (Chris Basham)
- End Bits (Ed)

Fr Paul Says.....



The beginning of March this year, coincides with Ash Wednesday on the 2nd of March and the start of our Lenten journey.

I use the word 'journey' deliberately because Lent is about a movement and journey towards the celebration of Easter. Ash Wednesday, itself a day of Fasting and Abstinence from meat, sets the pattern because it begins with ash, made from the burnt palms of Palm Sunday, with which we are signed on our foreheads with the prayer "Turn away from sin and believe in the Gospel", or the alternative "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return". We set out with ash, a sign of our need for the Holy Spirit to transform us and give us life. We conclude with the water and fire at the Easter Vigil which speaks eloquently of the gift of the Lord's risen life to each of us in Baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation. In nature ash follows fire, for the Christian during Lent and Easter, fire follows ash, proclaiming the new life of Easter and the resurrection of Jesus.

A New Year - A New Life



The Syrian Family (See 'Forty Days', February) were due to arrive on 1st February. Unfortunately, both parents tested positive for Covid on the morning they were due to fly. After ten days we were given a new date of 24 February. On 21st we were informed that their flight had been cancelled, again, due to a health problem. Details not given.

Their exit visa expires on 26th, and a new one will take a month, so we are now expecting them at the end of March. While frustrating for us, it must be devastating for the five of them.
(David Saunders)

The Catholic Chapels of Standlynch and Downton

Standlynch, a river crossing on the eastern side of the Avon just north of Downton, remained a centre of Catholicism after the Reformation. A church was built there around 1147 along with a priest's house. It was linked with the church in Downton but relations were not always harmonious. It remained a Catholic chapel until sometime after 1646 when the Lord of the Manor became an Anglican and it most probably remained as part of the Church of England until 1896.

Below: Downton Catholic Church today.



The church was rebuilt in 1677 and passed to the Nelson family who were given Trafalgar House and its lands in

Lent is given us as a 'joyful' season during which we prepare for the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter. The 'joyful' aspect is often camouflaged by the tradition which would exhort us to find something to 'give up' during Lent. Denying ourselves may certainly be part of the Lenten picture but it is not everything. To prepare for the renewal of our baptismal promises means that we are invited to examine our lives so that those things which inhibit or restrict the work of our Baptism can be changed, or if necessary, given up.

The work of our Baptism, as we have learned from the Sunday readings recently, is essentially about allowing our lives and relationships to become the visible and tangible presence of God's love which is poured into us by the Holy Spirit. It is living that love which will make us successful and effective in inviting others to have a relationship with Jesus as a member of the Catholic Christian community.

Lent is a time given to us so that we might change for the better. To repent in fact and the starting point is prayer. Each of us is invited to review and evaluate our prayer lives. Prayer is the time, energy, discipline, and commitment we give to our relationship with God in Christ. All relationships of love require that time and commitment and sometimes it is costly. That is true of our relationship with God, prayer is about giving God our attention each day. The way and method of prayer will vary from person to person, from personality type to personality type. There is only one hard and fast rule which is defined by St. Paul when he says, "Pray without ceasing". (I Thessalonians 5:17-19)

Our tradition offers many ways of prayer to suit different people. Many use the Rosary, many use Lectio Divina or reflection on a passage of scripture, some use the silence and extended time of contemplation, often repeating a short prayer like "Lord Jesus, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me a sinner". Whichever method we use, one thing applies to us all. We are to choose a time and place each day to do it.

Then there is 'giving things up'. The question for us all is this: What are those things which I must deny myself to be more generous in the Christian life and the commitment of my Baptism? Or more simply, what shall I give up as a sign of my love for Jesus? Again, like prayer, it will be different for each of us. All we need do is ask the Lord in prayer to enlighten us about the ways in which we are invited to exercise self-denial: it could be something we consume, it could be something that uses an excessive amount of our time, it could be anxiety about the past or future which prevents us from living fully in the present.

Finally, the Lenten journey is a time to review and evaluate the ways in which we express our love for others. This includes all the people who share our lives whether they live in our homes, are members of our parish, are people with whom we work, or the two billion people in the world

1813.¹ The church was given a major restoration by the nationally important architect William Butterfield in 1859-66, by which time it had become a centre of "High Church" Anglicanism. In 1896 the then Lady Nelson converted to Catholicism (What would Horatio have thought? Ed) and turned the church into a private Catholic chapel with a resident priest. It was rededicated to Mary Queen of Angels and St Michael and all the Angels.

The old church remained an active Catholic chapel until the Nelson family left Trafalgar House in 1947. As a parting gift they built a very simple church in 1950 on a piece of land in Barford Lane, much closer to the centre of Downton and paid money to the Diocese in order to maintain regular services there. The church was dedicated to the Good Shepherd.



The chapel is built of concrete blocks yet, despite its simplicity, has an amazing spiritual presence. It comes under the control of St Osmund's parish in Salisbury but is largely cared for by the local Catholics. Sunday Masses, which had an attendance of between 40 and 45, ceased some years ago and now there is just a Mass on the third Thursday of every month. A small congregation remains and they meet every Tuesday evening on Zoom for a Service of the Word, and are very involved with the Downton Churches Together movement.

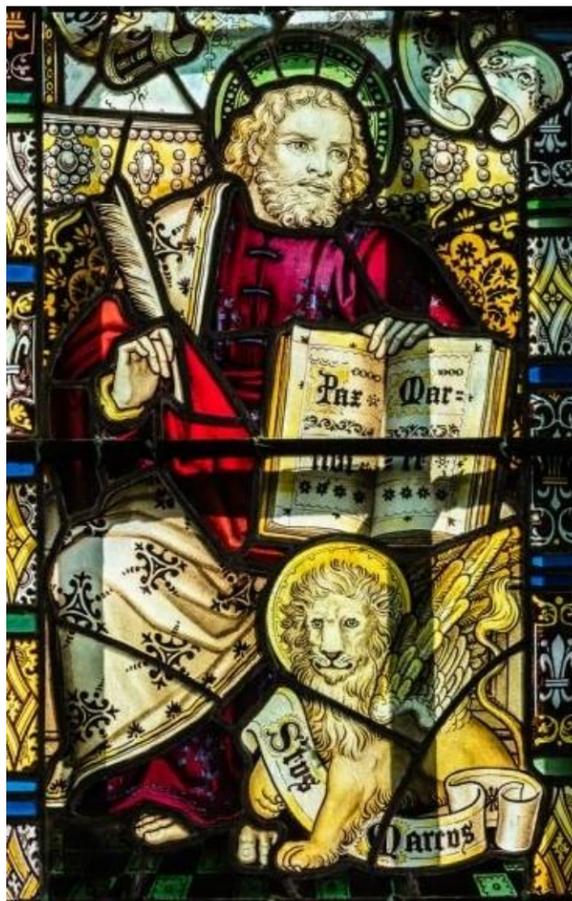
If anyone is interested in visiting the church or joining us for Mass or on Zoom service contact me at jpelliott@btinternet.com or on 01722 711665.

¹ Trafalgar House was first built in 1733 and added to in 1766.

(John Elliot)

St David

St David is the patron saint of Wales. He died on 1 March – St David's Day - in 589 and is buried at the site of St David's Cathedral. David was born in 500, reputedly on a Pembrokeshire cliff top in a fierce storm. The site of his birth is marked by the ruins of Non's chapel and a Holy well. Both his parents were descended from Welsh royalty, his father was prince of Powys and his mother, Non, daughter of a chieftain.



David became a renowned preacher, founding monastic settlements and churches in Wales, Brittany and southwest England – including, possibly, the abbey at Glastonbury. David and his monks followed a simple, austere life. They ploughed the fields by hand, rather than using oxen, and refrained from eating meat or drinking beer. The most famous miracle associated with St David took place when he was preaching to a large crowd; the people at the back complained that they could not hear him, the ground on which he stood rose up to form a hill so he could be seen. A white dove, sent by God, settled on his shoulder.

His last words to his followers came from a sermon he gave on the previous Sunday: 'Be joyful, keep the faith, and do the little things that you have heard and seen me do.' Do the little things in life' - is still a well-known phrase in Wales.

After his death, his influence spread far and wide, including Cornwall and Brittany. In 1120, Pope Callactus II canonised David as a Saint. Such was David's influence that many pilgrimages were made

who do not have enough to eat or drink. Lent is given us that we might reflect on the lives of those people we find difficult so that we might understand them more deeply so as to be more compassionate and forgiving

Poetry Please

On Wenlock Edge

On Wenlock Edge the wood's in trouble;
His forest fleece the Wrekin heaves;
The gale, it plies the saplings double,
And thick on Severn snow the leaves.

'Twould blow like this through holt and hanger
When Uricon the city stood:
'Tis the old wind in the old anger,
But then it threshed another wood.

Then, 'twas before my time, the Roman
At yonder heaving hill would stare:
The blood that warms an English yeoman,
The thoughts that hurt him, they were there.

There, like the wind through woods in riot,
Through him the gale of life blew high;
The tree of man was never quiet:
Then 'twas the Roman, now 'tis I.

The gale, it plies the saplings double,
It blows so hard, 'twill soon be gone:
To-day the Roman and his trouble
Are ashes under Uricon.

(A E Housman)

It's a pity I used up my best poem to describe the wicked gales we have been having in Ted Hughes's "Wind" which I put in in January, but this one's good too. We find Housman looking out into the Shropshire countryside in a storm and thinking how in times gone by the same winds had battered the ancient city of Uricon below and now long forgotten.



I can't offer you The Wrekin, but here's Castle Hill, and I promise it was blowing! I can't offer you a Roman city, but here's an extract from The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle describing The Battle of Charford which took place down there in the year 527.

"Here Cerdic and Cynric fought against the Britons at the place that is called Cerdic's Ford" (Cerdic's Ford is identified with Charford and a Time Team investigation discovered a collection of what might have been warriors' bones nearby in an attempt to find the remains of Breamore Priory.)

to St. David's, and the Pope decreed that two pilgrimages made to St. Davids equalled one to Rome while three were worth one to Jerusalem.

My main memory of St David's day when I lived in Wales was a day off school and being annoyed when we moved to England that I had to go to school on such a special day. My mother always made a special Bara Brith. It is usual to wear a daffodil or a leek on St David's Day - I favour a daffodil as I don't like leeks!

(Barbara Geatrell)

Fabulous Forest

Forest Law

We are a funny lot in England! Where else in the world would a forest established nearly a thousand years ago be called 'New'?

The Forest was the hunting ground of kings. It had very little to do with woods! The Anglo-Saxon kings had always hunted. On The Continent, Charlemagne had been famous for it,



as had the French kings and nobility. Anglo-Saxon kings had confined their hunting activity mostly to their own lands, but William the Conqueror had altogether bigger ideas and, since he, as conqueror, owned all the land, could divide it up between his retainers and still have plenty left for himself as 'Forest'.

The New Forest came into being in about 1079 by his order and the peasants who lived there were driven off to make way for the forest creatures, and the King who would hunt them down. Those peasants who remained as inhabitants were forced to live under a draconian regime of forest laws governing every aspect of their economic life. No longer could they bring new land into cultivation, defend the land they had from the depredations of 'The King's Beasts' by erecting fences or by killing the game. No longer could they take firewood or turf or cultivate trees or crops. Nothing could be taken except by the direction of the King's officers – verderers, agisters, wardens, keepers and bailiffs – supported by their own courts of law. Penalties for infringements, even minor ones, were severe including mutilation and hanging. On the other hand, it was often found more productive to punish offenders by fines and confiscation by means of which the king's wealth and that of his officers could be increased.

For the next hundred and fifty years successive

Gardeners' Corner



The garden is gradually showing promising signs of

Spring. It is interesting that the timing is about the same as previous years, for example, my main clumps of snowdrops were in full flower on 5 February 2021 and 2022. It is a similar story with the daffodils.

not to I am trying this year to spread out my seed planting so I now have two healthy small 'balcony tomato plants' and 3 seedlings of tumbling tomatoes in the propagator and will sow more tomatoes later. I have deliberately resisted planting cauliflower seeds for another month at least as last year I had eight large cauliflowers ready the same time as the peas and broad beans! It is taking all my control sow the seeds as I want to get going.



I have been noticing signs of Spring in the recent growth spurt of 'weeds' growing at the base of local hedgerows, notably the fresh looking leaves of wild garlic and cuckoo pint.

(Barbara Geatrell)

Cookery Corner

Vegetarian Sausage and Apple Casserole

1 chopped onion or 6 shallots, peeled & thickly sliced

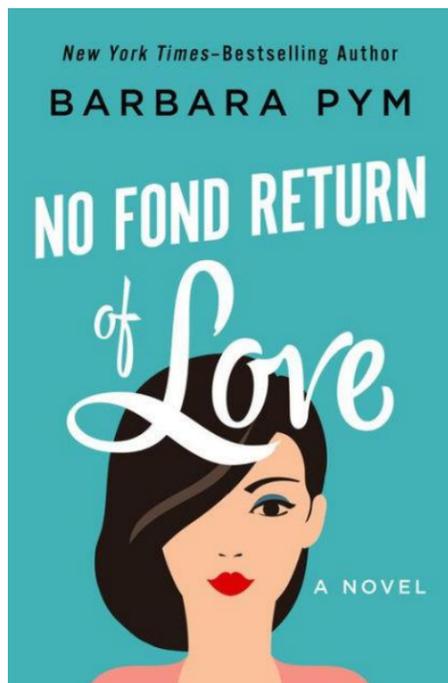
Reading Recommendations

“No Fond Return of Love”

Barbara Pym

Sometimes I feel that I am living in a Barbara Pym novel. I feel this particularly when serving coffees in church after Mass on Sunday.

Although Barbara Pym’s novels are set mostly in the 1950s, when women could still be ‘spinsters’ and people made marmalade, her books still have relevance, much as Shakespeare and Bach speak to us over the centuries. Dulcie (the heroine of this book) says ‘ People blame one for dwelling on trivialities, but life is made up of them. And if we’ve had one great tragedy or one great love, then who shall blame us if we only want the trivial things’. I just want trivial things.



Dulcie is one such ‘spinster’ having been jilted by her fiancé. But she has a secret hankering for the handsome charismatic Dr Aylwin Forbes, author and eminent editor of a literary publication. Much research is undertaken by Dulcie in phone directories and Who’s Who as to this wonderful man’s background. Dr. Forbes, however, having been abandoned by his wife, is in love with Dulcie’s 19-year-old niece, and loves to see her and her friends dressed in fluffy coats and sweaters ‘which make them look like delicious furry animals’. (This could all seem a bit dodgy, but actually there is an innocence and vulnerability in all Barbara Pym’s characters, which is very apparent when read in context!). Ultimately, of course, Dr. Forbes becomes aware of Dulcie’s many homely virtues.

Many in the literary establishment feel that Barbara Pym is underrated, and should be regarded in the same class as other great mid twentieth century writers. I love her books and have read and reread them many times, particularly in times of stress.

Penny has left the children’s slot to me this month. My connection with kid’s reading now is a bit remote because I’m not teaching it. It must be Penny’s name, but thinking what to write about, I came back to another Penny, Penelope

kings, by stealth, took more and more land into their forests until by 1215 nearly a third of England was ‘forest’.

In 1215, as every schoolchild knows, King John was forced to agree the terms of Magna Carta by which he undertook to release from the Forest those lands that he and his brother Richard I and his father Henry II had craftily brought under their control. Local justices were to enquire into the matter and see that land taken was restored to its former free status. The King’s corrupt keepers, and the like were to be rooted out. People living nearby, but outside the Forest jurisdiction, were to be relieved from having to present themselves in the Forest Court, where they might be fined or ‘amerced’, unless directly involved in a case. Riverbanks, important to the King and Lords for hawking were to be de-afforested and other evil practices abolished. Disafforested lands were to be known as ‘purlieus’ Good news for the forest dwellers!

The kindly Pope, Innocent III, annulled Magna Carta, thereby cancelling the reforms and the relief it would have given to the people, but in 1216 the document (slightly amended to suit The Pope) was re-issued by Henry III and again in 1217, by which time it had evolved into two Charters. Magna Carta, or The Great Charter which dealt with the law in general, and a new document, having equal importance known as The Forest Charter to deal with the matters of the rights and wrongs of forest law, whereby the 1215 reforms were restored.

Gradually, the king’s hunting grounds have been returned to communities, their extent much diminished today, and the most draconian laws, at least, repealed!

(Chris Basham)

Parish Walk.

David Saunders organised a fine ramble from Ashley Walk car park just along the Southampton Road, on a rather cold and cloudy afternoon.

If you have ever thought you might like to join the group but weren’t sure if it was for you please give it a try. It’s a mixed bunch in terms of age and fitness - and with all the chat the pace doesn’t, thankfully, go too fast! This was my first parish walk and it was delightful.

About a dozen of us gathered in the carpark and set off down the hill. There was a mixture of parishioners from both Fordingbridge and Ringwood - it’s a good way to get to know people you see in church but don’t know well enough to speak to.

David told us we would encounter a few relics from the Second World War - the heathland around this area was used by the RAF as a training and testing area for bombing. There are a few craters left by bombs - filled with water at this time of year - and although most of the infrastructure was dismantled after the war there is still a large mound, covered with earth and vegetation now, that was once the Ministry of Home Security Target - known as the ‘submarine pens’. Made of heavily reinforced concrete, it

Mushrooms and celery – sliced

6 vegetarian sausages – each cut into 4 pieces



Thyme, peppercorn, mixed herbs

3 large potatoes – peeled and cut into chunks

500ml stock – ingredients as preferred though the following work well -

2 teaspoons cornflour, 4 teaspoons onion gravy granules, Aromat, Knorrvegetable cube, oxo cube, Knorr liquid stock, Sarson’s Browning

2 apples – cut into wedges or slices

Optional extras – sweet potato, parsnips, carrots

Fry onions mushrooms & celery with herbs in wok. Place in casserole dish

Fry sausages until nicely browned – add to dish
Fry potatoes and any optional extras with thyme and peppercorn for a few minutes – add to dish
Make stock.

Mix dry ingredients with a little cold water and add liquid ingredients – dissolve the 2 cubes in hot water and add to stock mix
Pour stock into dish and gently stir
Place casserole in hot oven until it boils. Reduce to no.4 gas (180c electric) for 1-2 hours
Add apples for final few minutes

(Janet Arden)

A Mournful Task

I am in the process of packing up my late husband’s (Graham’s) books. These number in the thousands. The majority of them are cloth or leather bound hardbacks, some extremely old, most of them acquired from second-hand book shops.

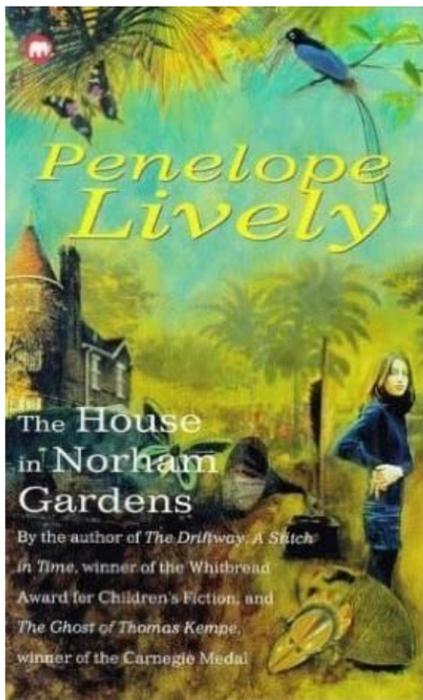
We are packing them in three main categories. History, Economics and Literature. But we also have a couple of boxes of books in French.

Although I have lived with and flicked my duster over these books for several decades, I am only now discovering the range of his interests. He has the unabridged volumes of Pepys’ diaries, several volumes of History of the British Isles, diaries and speeches and biographies of obscure 18th century politicians and long-forgotten kings. His literature titles range from Milton to John Masters and he owned what must be every work by Kipling, many boys’ stories from ancient days when boys had time to read (R M Ballantine,, Talbot Baines Reid, Henry), thousands of titles. His Economics titles are way, way too technical for me.

It is a fascinating job, and an incredibly sad one. But I have loved living in a house lined with bookcases (many made by Graham) filled with

Lively, whose books children, and I have to say particularly girls, enjoy reading.

“The Ghost of Thomas Kempe” has always been, popular and concerns James and a poltergeist. Finding an ancient bottle concealed in his old house, James releases the ghost, who proceeds hilariously, to do mischief all round the town of Ledbury, (actually Evesham!) and for which James, of course, gets the blame, until he finds the means to ‘lay’ the ghost. It’s not creepy and enjoyed by both boys and girls.



Like many of her books, “The Ghost of Thomas Kemp” makes use of resonances between the past and the present which I find engaging. If you have a thoughtful girl in the family, try her on “The House in Norham Gardens”, where Clare, an orphaned girl, finds herself in the home, in Oxford, of her two elderly aunts growing up and finding her identity today - surrounded by relics of her family and their complicated past.

If you have kids into fossils and things, and maybe a just bit younger, try them on “A Stitch in Time” about a girl holidaying with her family in Lyme Regis.

(Penny Sharp and Chris Basham)

Synod

The Synod process has been continuing and progress is being made. I shall not be reporting it here, but I’m happy to publish your comments and I’ll try to keep you posted as the consultation continues

I attended the Fordingbridge meeting and was pleased to find that attendance was encouraging, the discussion frank, positive and helpful. I know another useful meeting was held in Ringwood. All the material emanating from the meetings and the written responses sent separately will go to Fr. John Chandler at Bordon who is heading up the coordinating team. The final document goes to the Bishop for sign off. Then it goes to the Bishop’s Conference to be collated into the national response which goes to the Vatican and the Pope.

There will be a full report when all the data is in, published separately. Although the findings will not be published in this old rag, I will be more

was used as a target for some of the biggest bombs used in the war. Barnes Wallis’ bouncing bombs were also tested here. Some of us struggled up its steep, rather slippery, path to stand on top and admire the view. It’s an odd landmark on the heath and unless you had been told you would scarcely guess that a huge concrete structure lurks beneath. The bombs couldn’t destroy it and neither could anyone else, so they buried it!



'U-Boat Pens' (Photo CB 2019 marked as 'tumulus' on OS.)

We continued back through Pitts Wood, where there are lots of stick dens made by local children, and then crossed a stream. Those without stout boots might have got wet feet! There is a pretty path along the brook that returns you to the bridge below the car park, with a last struggle up the hill. It probably took us a couple of hours and was taxing enough to be a good walk while not too difficult. It was great to get some fresh air in your lungs alongside good company.

Thanks, David, for a beautiful and interesting walk.

(Stephanie Bartel)

End Bits

As always, a grateful thanks to all contributors, and an invitation to new ones!

Penny, I relate very much to your piece about clearing out books. I don’t do it! My bookcase is a mess and books spread outside bookcases, around the house and into the loft where, preserved and mouldering, are not only my college essays, Open University units and MA dissertation, but the fabulous set of Arthur Mee’s Children’s Encyclopaedia purchased in the 1920s by my grandfather for my dad. Dad asked me to look after them. I still do! When bought, they must have been something of a family investment, I think. I read them as a kid during bouts of asthma. My books are my life! And having said that, makes me relate even more closely to your title.

A gentle word to contributors: I do understand the temptation to combine your text and documents into a composition and send to me in that form. Please resist! Just send plain text and photos as separate entities. You have no idea the problems I have sorting it out when I try to insert your work into my document. Josie (A Day in Venice) sent a much more appropriate picture that I was completely unable to manage, and Janet’s recipe for Cookery Corner absolutely refused to fit into the magazine format until I had retyped it and shortened all the lines in which process, I hope, I have not garbled it up!

handsome books.

Now to tackle mine! See picture below! Mostly paperbacks, and I must say they look a little trashy. But I love them all the same.



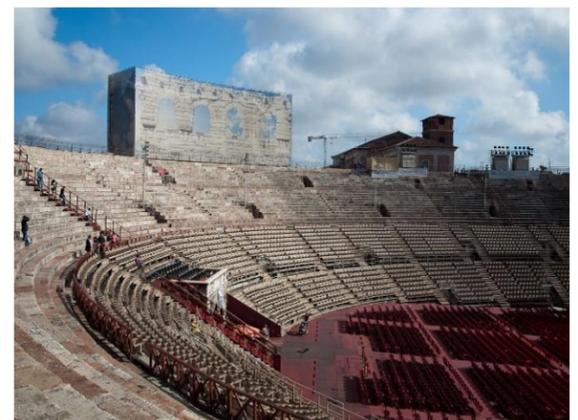
(Penny Sharp)

A Day In Venice (And Verona!)

My son and I stood on the roof of St Mark’s Campanile at twelve o’clock when the bells rang, twelve times! It was deafening. We had already visited the Basilica, where I found the reredos of solid gold, embedded with jewels – ‘Mind Boggling’.

My cousin, Giulio and wife brought us to Venice, arriving about nine a.m. where we caught the river bus taking us to the Rialto. Stuart had to have a beer in Fabians! Giulio then took us on a tour of the back streets, showing us where Aunt Anna had had a shop. We grabbed a sandwich then back to the Rialto, up another tower, over the Bridge of Sighs etc.

We left at 4 pm then went to Verona and visited the amphitheatre where they were rehearsing AIDA. Then back to Olginate (a three hour journey), where we had giant pizzas, then on to Bellagio at about 10 pm, where another Aunt and Cousin were waiting to meet us. What a day!



Verona Amphitheatre

(Josie Musselwhite)

Theatre Visits

Right at the end of January I organised a visit with a group of friends to The Theatre Royal at Bath to see “The Hound of The Baskervilles”, a very fast moving comedy (and not the Gothic horror story my friends were expecting. Apparently I forgot to

than happy to publish your thoughts and comments in letters to the editor, so please write in so the dialogue and reaction can continue.

(Chris Basham and Fr P)

Please remember: Text, Times Roman, twelve point and photos as jpgs and I shall love you forever!

Now I've filled up the space opposite with visits to the Theatre, it would be really good if readers could write in and tell us about where they have been and what they have got up to now the restraints have slackened. Keep your writings flooding in! Too much of me this time!

Chris

notify them of the fact and they were slightly, but pleasantly surprised!

If you've not been to Theatre Royal, it is something of a gem in itself; authentically Georgian and a place to be seen in as well as to see the play. I wonder if Jane Austen went?

The play was hilarious and it was our first theatre visit since just before Covid when we went to "Upstart Crow" in London. We seemed to escape scot free and I hope the result will be the same when we go to Southampton in March to see "Les Miserable". I've been three times and still can't work out which of the many characters is the Les of the title!

(Chris Basham)