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Prestbury Parish Magazine

North Cheltenham Team Ministry

October 2025

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please contact one of the clergy *(telephone numbers above)*

Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Editors, the Clergy, the Parochial Church Council, or of any authoritative body of the Church of England

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mary and St Nicolas Prestbury Cheltenham - Registered Charity No 1130933

continued inside back cover

Cover Picture *by Brian Wood*
A Medieval Cider Press at the Arthurian Centre, at Slaughterbridge, Camelford near the site of the legendary last battle of King Arthur against Mordred

Reflections from Reverend Jacqueline

Summer seems to be a distant memory as we turn from its associated balmy evenings, holidays and barbecues to autumn and cooler, wetter weather, shorter days and harvest festivals. I, for one, love this time of year when we see the colours of the leaves turning, the crisp mornings and the smell of bonfires and woodsmoke. The vibrant flowers in our garden have taken a back seat to the foliage which is becoming more impressive each day. Our apple trees have been incredibly productive, to the point where a branch broke because of the weight of the fruit!

October 21st is Apple Day, which was founded in 1990 by a charity called Common Ground, who wanted to highlight and demonstrate the variety of produce we are in danger of losing. The apple became their symbol of the provenance of our food and rich diversity of wildlife which they work hard to support.

The humble apple has been a symbol of myths for centuries; the ancient Greeks believed that the apple was a symbol of fertility, in Norse myth, the apples were understood to bring eternal youth to anyone who ate them and of course, there is the discussion about whether it was an apple Eve picked from the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. There are songs, carols and poems all written about apples and there is still a tradition of 'wassailing' to sing to apple trees in the hope of ensuring a bountiful crop in the year ahead.

Apples are a very good representation for our lives. Supermarkets spend phenomenal resources on selling perfect specimens of fruit and pressurising farmers and growers to cultivate fruit that is blemish-free. Beauty is only skin-deep and we have to ask whether what might look perfect on the outside is as appetising on the inside. This is not a new dilemma as social media and lifestyle magazines continue to bombard the public with images of 'perfect' bodies and airbrushed celebrities. There is an expectation among some young men and women that they need to look a certain way or should strive for perfection, rather than being happy in their own skins. In 2025, the UK beauty industry is worth £31.5 billion!

Maybe it would be better for all of us to be more accepting of ourselves and each other, however we come. God made us all in His own image and we are, as they say, "the apple of his eye". The rich diversity and variety of our world should be embraced and encouraged. Perhaps as we celebrate harvest and creation, we could also give some thought about humanity as God's creation and give thanks for the gifts we have been individually given. Personally, I will be using my skills to make apple crumble and apple cake. The custard will be bought!

Rev Jacqueline

This month's theme is CRAFT

BUSY HANDS

Silk weaver in Turkey

If you are wondering what is meant by a craft, may I suggest you look on the website of National Charity for Heritage Crafts (Patron: King Charles III). On heritagecrafts.org.uk, you will find details of a multitude of crafts, listed alphabetically from A to W, from Armour and Helmets via Leatherworking to Woodwind Instrument Making. Some heritage crafts here are on their red list and classed as endangered in the UK, including Bell Founding, Organ Building and Piano Making, among many others.

In his book called *Expert*, Roger Kneebone sees three stages on the route to expertise. He calls them Apprentice, Journeyman, Master. His book analyses the various stages and approaches that can be taken on the way towards Expertise and Mastery.

I have never been formally apprenticed but I recognize certain early stages in work as informal training and familiarization with skills and processes. As a student one summer holiday, I helped an expert roofer to take down slates from a dilapidated structure in Devon and to preserve the ones which could be reused. He could tell by the look and feel of them that the heavy blue-grey slates had come from the quarry in Delabole and one tap from his hammer could tell Harry if the slate sounded shot or dud. We extracted the slate-nails with a claw hammer and he taught me how to turn the old slates over and re-pin them on the roof-slats. That way about half the precious and pricey slates were saved.

I suppose the area in which I have been most rigorously and repeatedly trained is in the use of language and the study of literature. Composition in English can be as technical as music and of course there are various styles and registers available. Dylan Thomas titled one of his poems 'In my Craft or Sullen Art' and we can talk about a play as well-made and a poem as well-crafted. W.H. Auden referred to the original artisan as 'the first flaker of flints/ who forgot his dinner.' Poet Laureate Simon Armitage has also spoken about his admiration of those who make things and the pleasure he gains from crafting a poem out of words. Indeed, the equivalent word for poet in Ancient Greek means a maker.

I am in awe of those who use their hands, minds and expertise to create wonderful objects: harpsicords, violins, and guitars, for example. Where and how do you begin? Charles III, formerly as Prince of Wales and now as King, has long been energetic in fostering skilled crafts and arts where they might have become endangered, neglected or moribund. He remains passionate both about the responsible use of the planet's resources and providing opportunities for young people to develop indispensable skills. 'For nearly every problem we face, Nature, with the benefit of billions of years of evolution, has already provided us with the solutions,' he says.

The King's Foundation provides funds for some 15,000 students a year to learn crafts, skills and traditional arts in many areas ranging from Furniture and Farming to Costume and Ceramics. The Foundation also offers courses on such diverse skills as painting halos in Byzantine Icons and Ottoman Miniature Painting, for example. The King talks about the 'battle' to preserve 'timeless' skills, and in this industrial age of computer-generated programs and 3-D printing, such manual crafts and traditional skills are often and increasingly at risk.

Pottery, Textiles, Knitting, Carpentry, Jewellery, Metalwork, Origami? What are your active or even passive skills and crafts and how much use do you make of them? With the current emphasis on repairs, recycling and conservation, traditional crafts and skills are again at a premium. The Crafts Council in London aims to present some of the best work currently being produced.

I sometimes wonder whether the job of teaching is an art, science, skill, vocation or a mixture of these. My good friend and colleague, Clare Addison, held the view that pupils of all ages needed to have 'Busy Hands'. If their hands were occupied then their minds were probably engaged. Whether it was writing notes, annotating texts, tapping laptops, presenting ideas, making anthologies or researching projects, busy hands helped to focus young minds, and often, she was right. "What will the students actually be doing?" became a useful question.

'Not many people nowadays can do much with their hands,' so said a local metalworker who operated what was a kind of repair shop. He mended for us a large old iron key where the patterned ward had broken off and he did it by skilfully inserting two brass pins to join the separated parts invisibly.

It is more than satisfying to create something useful, elegant, entertaining, eye-catching or whatever, where there was nothing much more than a blank before.

Duncan Forbes

CRAFTS

Large brown paper parcels, securely fastened with strong twine and glistening blobs of sealing wax, would arrive at our home during my childhood. No presents were inside these tempting looking parcels because they heralded the arrival of my Welsh grandmother and contained her clothes. She tended to come for visits of 4 or 5 weeks and the first my mother knew of her impending arrival was the parcels. Once she arrived we quickly learned to say, 'bore da' (good morning), 'nos da' (good night) and the most delicious of words, 'ychafi' which signified revulsion and disgust at something mucky.

My brother and I adored our grandmother; she loved and indulged us. She was almost as anxious about incurring my mother's displeasure as we were and entered into our childhood world with enthusiasm. Her hair was divided into rolls, fixed to her head by hairpins, and we were staggered by the enormous pink corset she struggled to fasten every day. She played with us, sang to us and even danced with us. She also tidied all my mother's cupboards and drawers.

I loved her stories about her own childhood, even of the sister who died of tuberculosis, after which my grandmother and two of her sisters were sent to stay on a farm to remain healthy. They used to put slices of cucumber on their eyes to make them beautiful and they drank a lot of milk. Born in 1889, Martha (Grandma) left school at 12 and, as a Welsh speaker, she never really mastered written English. When I was about nine she asked me how to spell 'doubt'. I was proud of knowing how to but she steadfastly refused to believe me when I got to the letter 'b'. We had to wait for my mother to confirm my version.

Martha did not allow her deficiencies in written English to deter her. She wrote letters exactly as she spoke, full of love and wonder. When she was in her early teens a cousin from London came to stay with her family. He was an only child and longed for company, so his parents asked if they could take Martha home with them to live. She came from a large family with many mouths to feed and so her parents agreed. Her uncle and aunt apprenticed her to a milliner so that she would always have a craft to ply. Before she had

completed her training however, she heard someone on the street preaching that the end of the world was coming which sent her hurrying back home to her family.

Although she never made hats to sell, she had become a wonderful needlewoman, highly skilled in embroidery. She embroidered tablecloths, tray cloths and numerous large antimacassars, decorated with ladies in crinolines walking in flower-filled gardens. Birds and butterflies featured too in bright jewel-like colours. I inherited her tin of embroidery silks but, alas, not her skills. She made me beautiful dolls' clothes, the envy of my friends, adorned with smocking. All our dressing tables were dotted with crocheted mats. Sadly, I have nothing now remaining of her wonderful crafts, apart from a small tablecloth found in my mother's linen store.

A chance to make costumes for fancy dress ignited her imagination. My brother and I would be tricked out to appear in the local village fête. He was a proud John Bull but only a doting grandmother could have dressed me, a fat toddler, as a buttercup.

She would turn her hand to any practical task, mixing herbal remedies for all ills and making us bedside cabinets out of orange boxes covered in wallpaper. When she decided her brass bedsteads were unfashionable, she simply sawed the knobs off. Her garden was a feast of colour but the worst crime you could commit in her house in south Wales was to fail to close the garden gate. The sheep which wandered freely down from the mountains would enter and eat everything.

A woman born in Queen Victoria's reign, she still enriches my memories.

Debbie Forbes

CRAFTS

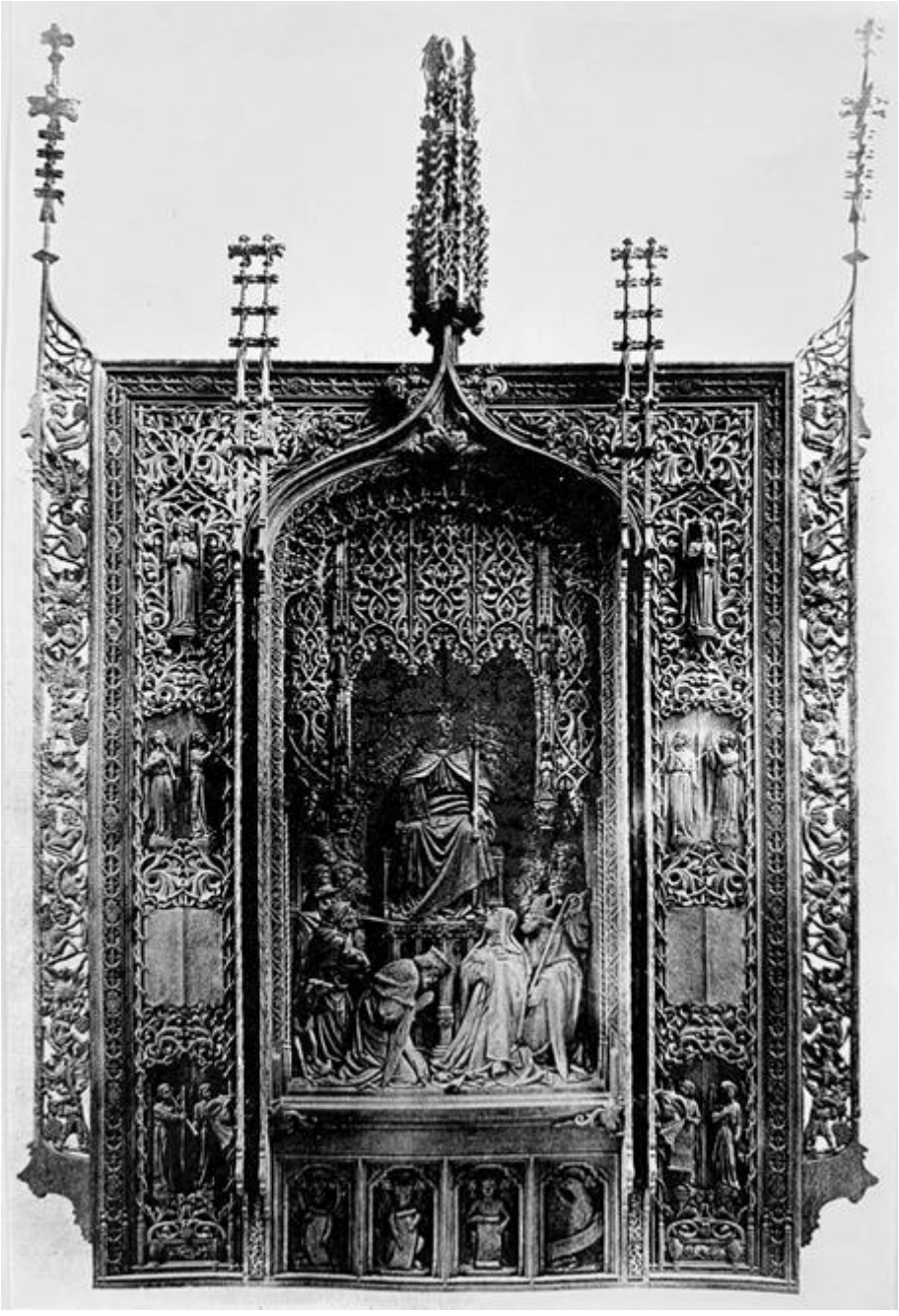
When I was called up for National Service in 1948, my mother said to me, "They will ask your father's profession. Make quite sure you say, 'ecclesiastical woodcarver', not just 'woodcarver' – there is a big difference". Likewise, when Dad died the following year, she made certain that the wording on his gravestone read 'Horace Parkin, Ecclesiastical Woodcarver'. She was very proud that he spent his life carving figures of Our Lord, angels, cherubs, delicate and intricate tracery on chancel screens and eagles on lecterns, all of which graced churches and cathedrals the world over. His father Tom, did exactly the same some years earlier after The Great War; both were in turn foreman woodcarvers at R L Boulton & Sons in Cheltenham, the country's leading ecclesiastical/monumental sculptors. Although my father was extremely clever with his craft, it was my grandfather, Tom Parkin, who was the genius. If Grinling Gibbons came top of the list of ecclesiastical woodcarvers of all time, then I am sure Tom Parkin would have been very close behind him.

Besides his carvings, my father was an expert in calligraphy. Determined not to get me involved in woodcarving, he was most anxious that I should become competent in the art of lettering. He thought that the financial rewards for the former were very poor for the skill involved. That, of course, was in the years between the wars. It would be different nowadays. Think of the great fire at Windsor Castle and all the renovations. My only contribution to family skills with wood was to make a wooden toasting fork in my school woodwork lessons at the Central School. (Not the most practical of items!)

At an early age Dad taught me not woodcarving, but calligraphy, and from that I developed my own style which added another and important string to my bow. I used it extensively during my working life when employed as artist to the Spirax group of companies and in my own business, scripting portraits and racing photographs which were framed for the racing fraternity, and the Queen Mother. This lettering appealed to King Charles when he was Prince of Wales. Soon after his uncle Lord Louis Mountbatten was murdered by the IRA, someone sent him a very long poem about Lord Louis, and he commissioned the well-known equine artist Susan Crawford to paint a portrait of him, around which I was asked to provide the calligraphy for this never-ending rhyme! It was an exacting task and any semblance of a mistake on my part would have spelled disaster for both me and the artist. The tribute to the man whose polo ponies I had exercised in the army and served under at sea was completely coincidental. Little did Prince Charles know that I was already well-acquainted with Lord Louis, his wife the Countess, and their two daughters, especially the youngest, Lady Pamela, who was but two years my senior. The ladies often came to chat about the ponies at polo matches, and Pamela used an office adjacent to mine in 1948/49 in the Auberge de Castille, Valletta (British military headquarters, Malta) where she worked for SSAFA (the armed forces charity - the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association).

My nephew Timothy is also an expert craftsman working with wood. He makes unique, bespoke furniture mainly to his own design and has created plenty of church furniture for Hereford Cathedral, for other scattered churches around Herefordshire, for the SAS, and amongst others, a couple of popstars and a middle eastern potentate! He is incredibly talented and holds regular exhibitions of his work including, like his grandfather, at the Three Counties Show.

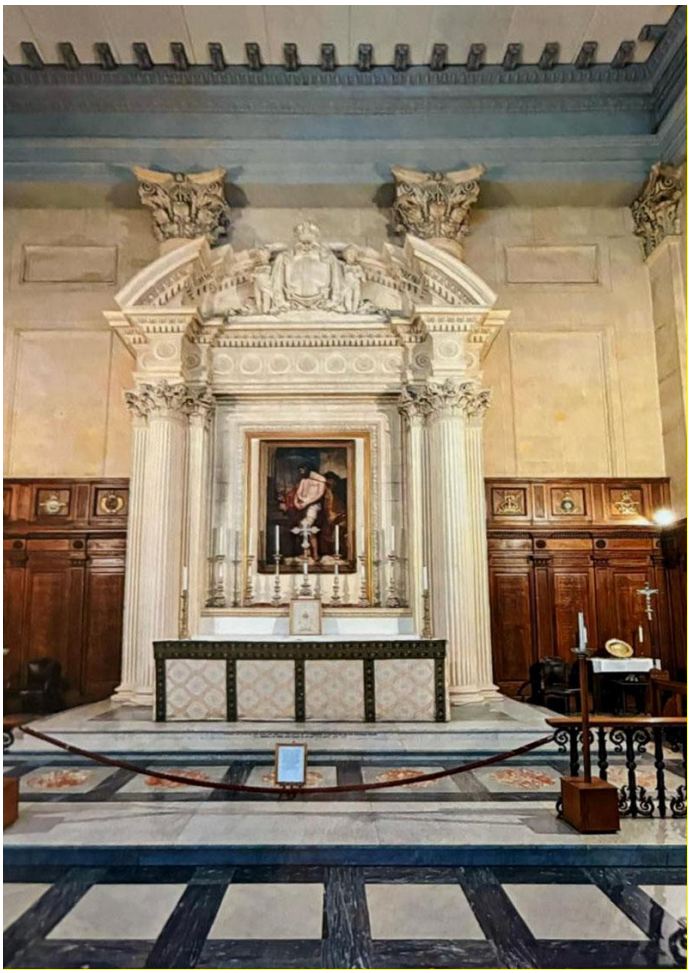
Going back to Dad and my grandfather, and because both were employed by R L Boulton at the same time, collaborating closely with the same architects, they were often to be found in Cheltenham carving away side by side on the same project. This was usually an elaborate reredos or chancel screen, of which there were many.



The reredos in St Chad's, Headingly, Leeds

Those I remember most are the reredos at St Chad's near the cricket ground at Headingly, because it was so big (25' high x 15' wide) and the intricate tracery on oak panelling all around the chancel at St Bartholomew's, Marsden near Huddersfield. Examples of Dad's lettering can be found in abundance around the chancel and altar in St Paul's Anglican Cathedral, Valletta, Malta GC. There are 14 oak panels of tightly packed names of Royal Naval vessels engaged in the defence of Malta during WW2 and the protection of the

merchant ships bringing essential supplies of food and fuel to a starving island. Also listed are the names of all these merchant ships, most of which were lost to enemy action, plus the names of all the military units based on Malta in those perilous times. A constant reminder of the many thousands of lives lost in the cause of freedom on both land, sea and in the air during that siege. Sadly, my father died a few weeks before his carvings were dedicated. I had been planning to attend the service at the cathedral, having almost finished my national service on Malta, but was sent home on compassionate leave and then demobbed.



Left: Some of the 14 panels, three each side of the altar in St Paul's. Right: two of the fourteen oak memorial panels around the chancel in St Paul's Pro-Cathedral, Valletta, Malta GC. Each panel has approximately 100 hand-carved names.

Photos by Elenor Weston-Davies, daughter of Val Fagan of St Mary's church choir

Near home, Dad's work can be seen around the organ loft in Cheltenham College Chapel and in St Mary's church Charlton Kings where he did all the carving in St David's side chapel. My grandfather was responsible for the two chancel screens in Charlton Kings, the figures on the rood beam and the carving on the lychgate. Neither had any work at St Mary's Prestbury – however, I did! My first solo job when employed by the architects Ellery Anderson, Roiser and Falconer was, to my surprise, to make a detailed hand-drawn survey of St Mary's church, which for a boy of 15 was a formidable thought, but turned out to be a most enjoyable task. Those plans, sections and elevations were used by Bevans of Gloucester to install a new heating system, so my boyhood claim to fame is of helping to

keep the congregation warm in the winter months, which must have been especially appreciated during the great freeze of 1947!

Dad, like me with Spirax, had his own private business away from Boulton's and this was evening and weekend work. First of all, he was woodcarving tutor at Cheltenham School of Art, and secondly he taught private pupils in his workshop in the basement of our home in Pittville. For a number of years before the war, he had a stand in the Guild of Gloucestershire Craftsmen's marquee at the annual Three Counties Show. He used to take me when young to these shows and I would help him erect his stand and display items such as panels of carved house names, life-size rabbits, miniature elephants, swallows in flight, plaques depicting famous landmarks (for instance, The Kings Arms and The Plough at Prestbury) and oak chests with elaborately carved frontals. I remember his favourite passage from the Bible was John, Chapter 15, verses 1-13. "I am the true vine, ye are the branches ….". That is why I have five vines in my garden as a reminder! He seemed to have a thing about vines; he enjoyed visiting The Vine Tree Inn in Mill Street and he was always carving bunches of grapes intertwined with tendrils, stems and vine leaves. Three examples decorate my home, and I am looking at one of them as I write this. It is the front panel of a large oak chest he used as an example when exhibiting his work at the Three Counties Show.

Incidentally, it was while helping Dad, that I used to sneak off and wander about amongst pigs and cattle being shampooed, which I'm sure developed my love for animals and country pursuits. During WW2, because he worked with wood, the government transferred him to H H Martyn & Son in Cheltenham, makers of the Speaker's Chair in the House of

Commons, the pulpit in St Paul's Cathedral and the Cenotaph in Whitehall. This firm was now making wooden tail units for Mosquito fighter bombers and the wooden cockpits for Horsa gliders which carried our airborne forces to Arnhem during Operation Market Garden. At the end of the war Dad resumed his work at Boulton's, taking over the position of foreman woodcarver from his late father.

When my grandfather Tom died, the eminent church architect Ellery Anderson wrote a tribute which appeared in newspapers up and down the country. Here is part of what he had to say: "Mr Parkin's skill as a carver was great and the personal interest he always took in carrying out his intricate work, made it always a pleasure to work with him. Ecclesiastical art has suffered a great loss through his death". Tom Parkin died during the height of WW2 on St George's Day 23rd April 1942. He had a fatal heart attack on the top deck of the No.2 bus from town to Charlton Kings on his way home from work; he was 68. Ellery Anderson died eight months later on 15th December 1942. Dad, Horace Parkin, did not die during the war like them, he died as a result of it, aged 49. Five years of overwork turned a fit man into one with severe health problems. Always comforting to know that all three men left lasting memorials to their skills. Their craft lives on in cathedrals and churches throughout the world. A fine commemoration.

Bernard Parkin

THE POTTER

You are the Potter, Lord, and we the clay.
My life is like a shelf of little pots.
Many are ugly and misshapen things.
They need to be remade, rethrown by you,
stamped with your Name.

But in the end You, Lord, must take them all,
mould them together in one single lump,
throw them upon your wheel,
fire with your love,
fill with your Spirit.
Then shall I be whole,
a fitting vessel for your glory, Lord.

Joan Copeland

The Holy Eucharist, with the Admission and Licensing of Readers and Licensing of Funeral Ministers

Saturday [13 September] afternoon saw Readers from around the Diocese converge on the Cathedral for their Annual Admission and Licensing of new Readers together with the licensing of Funeral Ministers. It is always a joyful service where Readers are invited to renew their commitment to Reader ministry. I always enjoy the opportunity to meet with fellow Readers and renew friendships with those I trained with more than 30 years ago. I was delighted to support Helen in the Cathedral as she begins her ministry as a Licensed Funeral Minister. *Linda Biggs*

Helen Mann, who has been newly licensed as a Funeral Minister, said, "I had not especially considered what the nature of the licensing service would be beyond the practicalities and therefore I was somewhat blown away by this most joyful and wonderful of occasions. Everyone was very welcoming, and every effort was made to make it very special indeed. It gave a true sense of gravity to our respective ministries as they are about to unfold. I am so very grateful to all involved."

The skilled boat builder and his wife

John and Sue were walking along the tow path by the Thames in Oxford, when John turned to Sue and said, "I built that eight."

Sue looked past John to the river and saw a rowing racing eight speed past up the river.

Trinity College Ladies' eight, identifiable by the dark blue blade with wide white stripe.
Photo Angie Brassey

"How do you know," she asked?

"By the shape of the bows, I always shaped the stem* in that fashion to allow the eight to cut through the water with minimum resistance."

So what is unusual about a 70-year-old boat builder recognising a boat he built 50 years ago? John had advanced Alzheimer's disease.

Sue took note of the colour of the oar blades, which told her to which college the boat belonged. She then rang the college boat house and asked the boatman for the identification number cut into the inside of the hull. She then rang Salters the boat builders and asked them to look in their registers and identify the builder. The manager rang her back and sure enough, "Yes, it was built by John!"

Footnote

Racing eights - as many of you will be aware from The Boat Race are slick, now carbon fibre, boats designed to cut the water with the minimum resistance and drag. The ones you will have seen in recent years are computer designed. In John's day these were hand built in timber, with each boat builder developing his own profiles. (For an update on the boat building industry see Women In Boat Building website) The ones you will have seen recently are, as I have said, computer designed, so now the skilled part of the boat design has largely moved to the skill of the Profile Analyst and the Computed Aided Design Technician. Nevertheless, in my opinion, for the purposes of this article, this system of analysis and design is a modern 'craft'.

John Moles

* The stem is the most forward point where the hull begins, and it connects to the keel. - Ed

Are you sitting comfortably?

Mike, the electrician from Beechwood Electrical Contractors, at work.

To weave all those cables with their individual wires whilst knowing the cross section of each piece of wire, and capacity of fuse for each cable, according to its use, is in my opinion, definitely a highly skilled craft.

Any thoughts to the editor please.

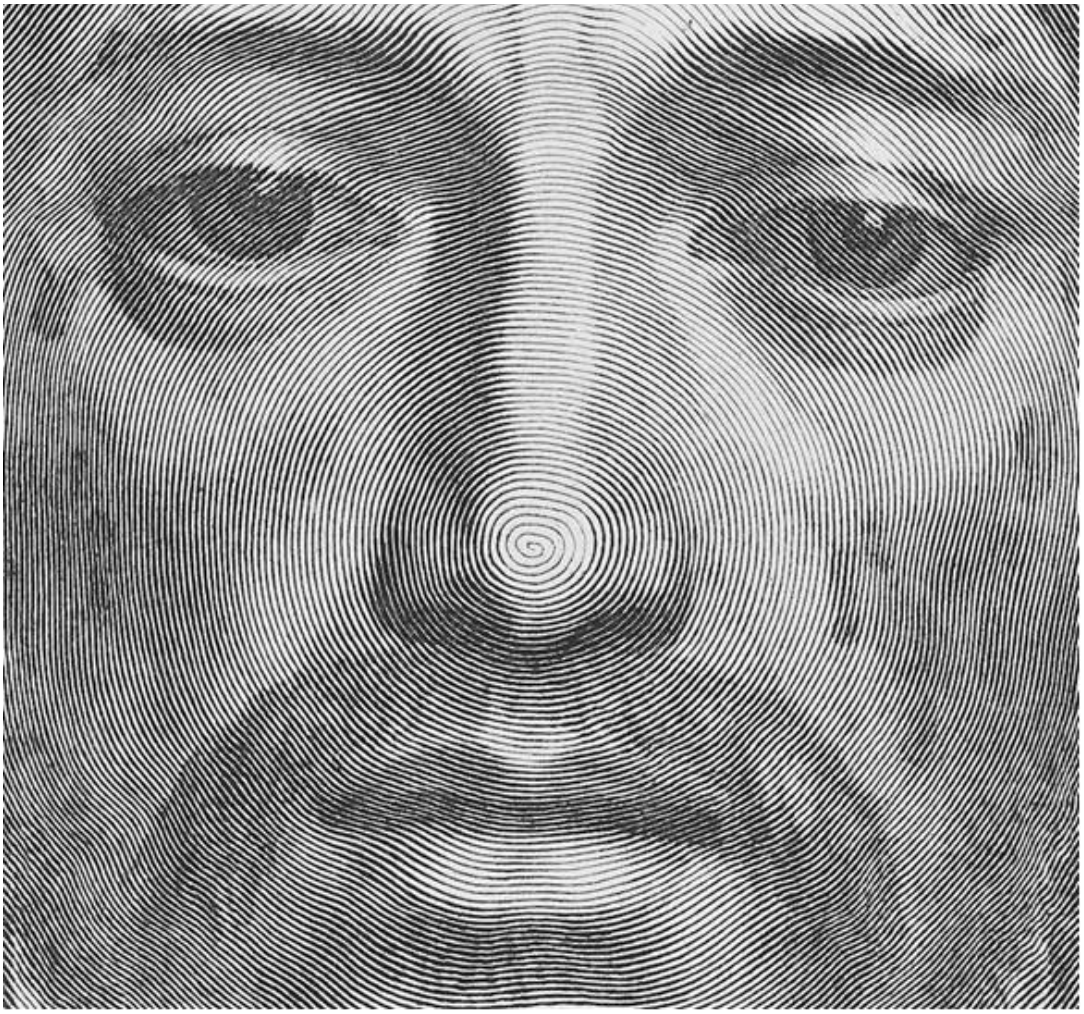
John Moles

THE MYSTIC SPIRAL

Face of Christ or Sudarium of St Veronica Claude Mellan 1649

One craft which is moribund is that of copperplate engraving because it has been superseded by other forms of printed reproduction. In its heyday, however, and particularly after the advent of printing, from about 1500 to 1900, the engraving of copper plates was a highly valued skill. William Blake, for example, was trained in the craft at the Royal Academy. Most such engravings were achieved by means of a burin with a sharp point pressed into a copper plate and shading was generally achieved with lines and cross-hatching.

Nevertheless, the French engraver Claude Mellan (1598 – 1688) developed a highly individual skill with parallel lines and, astonishingly, in 1649, he produced an engraving with one single spiral line of varying thickness to depict a devotional image of the Face of Christ or the Sudarium of Saint Veronica. And here it is seen in greater detail:



Amazingly, as a close-up reveals, the spiral line begins on the tip of Christ's nose and the one singular line of varying widths held the ink which was then impressed onto special paper. Various museums own copies of this rare baroque print, including the V&A and the Barber Institute, New York, Chicago, Ottawa and Sydney, while the original copperplate engraving is in the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels. The enigmatic Latin inscription on the hem of the veil is *Formatur Unicus Una Non Alter* or in other words (possibly) 'The unique one is formed by one [like] no other', alluding both to the image and to Christ's divine individuality. The engraving's conspicuous virtuosity was scorned by the anonymous contributor to *The Oxford Companion to Art* (1970) and dismissed in one snide sentence: 'Excessive skill turned much of his work into a sheer display of virtuosity, as in his *Head of Christ* done in one spiral line.' Fortunately, others have responded differently. One commentator sees it as flickering between an artwork and an icon, while scholar and art historian Irving Lavin states most appreciatively:

'. . . anyone who begins to trace the convolutions of the single, continuous, undulating spiral line that evolves (or devolves, depending on the direction one follows) ultimately to fill the universal void of the paper sheet, cannot escape becoming, as I have been, entranced, enchanted, bedazzled, to the point of obsession with this profoundly moving image.'

For me, this engraving represents supreme virtuosity in the service of art, craft and devotion to create a marvel and to embody a miracle.

Duncan Forbes

Advertisements

MARY'S MEMORIES – PART 2

Mary Edington, our oldest parishioner, pictured here on her 100th birthday in 2020, continues her memories with recollections of life in the 1930s and during the war (see the July 2024 magazine for Part 1). Mary left Battersea Central School at the age of 15 and began work at the General Nursing Council.

Working Life

Looking back, it was a very good job. When I joined, the offices were attached to Broadcasting House but they were having a new building built the other side of Portland Place. After I had been there a year or so, this building was finished and we moved into it – it was a beautiful building, all new furniture and things. I didn't appreciate it then as I hated going to work! I was in the exam department – we had to send all the exam papers out to all the hospitals all over the country and get them back when they had been completed. We were lucky as we finished a quarter of an hour earlier than most offices did which gave us a chance to get out and get on the trains and things before the crush. We were very well looked after as staff.

Mary's first place of work in Portland Place

I was with them for three years and then I had a local job because the doctor said that travelling up to town every day from Clapham Junction was too much for a teenager. So I got a local job in the office of Yardley's London and Provincial Stores Ltd in Chivalry Road, Battersea Rise. I could walk to work which took about 15 to 20 minutes or get the bus, which only took 3! I loved not having to go up to town and I could go home at lunchtimes – my mum always used to cook for me.

Church

Church was home, it was our life – we used to go to Sunday School. First Sunday in the month you used to go to 8 o'clock Communion (that was the only Sunday we had Communion), 11 o'clock Morning Service, 3 o'clock Sunday School, 6:30 Evening Service, so 4 times on the first Sunday! We loved it and we all belonged to it. It had two halls, a large one and a small one. Our guides and brownies used to use these halls and the Sunday Schools used them – they were always used. And that was our lives, it was the heart of the family. It was a good life; we were fortunate, I think, to be brought up in it.

St Paul's Church,
St John's Hill, Battersea

World War II

I remember the day war was declared – it was a Sunday and my dad had been ill with heart problems and had been home from work a lot. He hadn't got up for the early service and said he was going to go the 12 o'clock communion which was held after the morning service. I was going to go as usual to the morning service but I said I would wait and walk with him. The air-raid siren went as soon as the announcement had been made but it didn't last long.

An Anderson shelter in south London

We had an Anderson shelter - my father made it into a lovely rockery on top. It was like a garden shed inside – you had about three steps to go down. When the Blitz was on, we used to go down every night. There were four or five of us; we used to just about get home from work in time to have our evening meal if we were lucky (we worked until six in those days)– we didn't always manage to finish it actually – and then the sirens would go, so we would all troop down and be there until about 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning. I used to have a chair – that was Mary's chair - and I'd sit on the floor and rest my head and arms up on the seat and sleep. You'd go to bed for about two hours, get up and go to work and do it all over again! And that went on day after day after day - it's surprising how you adapted and how you survived. It was very bad for my mum as she'd had heart trouble for several years. A lot of people didn't use their shelters but my mother was so nervous that she made us go down as soon as the raid started. We were very lucky – the house survived without any damage apart from a few cracked windows and an incendiary bomb which just missed the house and landed in the garden. It was very boring but very intense – the bombing and the firing back. They put a great big gun on a railway carriage which used to go up and down – the railway was at the bottom of our garden, down a steep embankment. There were several lines as we were close to Clapham Junction.

When I was in the YWCA, I had to go up to Swiss Cottage for some training – lovely house and lovely gardens. While we were there, the doodlebugs had started and I remember sitting in the lounge when one landed. Literally, you could see the walls bow in and back out again. That's very vivid, that memory. The next day, they sent us home.

A Wartime Wedding

Ken and I got married in April 1940, when I was 19, because he'd got his call up to go to the army and he was away for three years, eleven months and three weeks! We had known each other a long time before we got married. My mother made a proper cake; it was only one tier but it was a big one. One of the girls in the office where I worked was on the grocery side and managed to get me sugar and other ingredients. Ken was married in his uniform and I was in an ordinary woollen suit as it was wartime. We only invited family as Ken had seven brothers and sisters and I had four – we had the reception at my house and my mum did it all. About twenty or thirty of us sat down to this meal, which was amazing.

She worked like mad, my mother, and all the time she was doing dressmaking to earn some money. I look back now and think however did she do it.

Ken was in England for four or five months before being sent abroad and I used to see him every weekend. I had to work Saturday mornings and then I'd go straight off and come back Sunday evening on the train. That was weird because you didn't know what trains you were getting on, there were no lights or anything and everything was pitch black – you'd just hope they were going in the right direction! I used to get off at the station, probably the only person getting off, and walk home in the pitch-black darkness and go straight in the shelter to a very relieved mother, who was on edge the whole time until I get home. It wasn't hard for me to get to work as I worked locally. Most of the men at work were called up and the few who weren't volunteered for the Civil Defence Service. They told us about all the warehouses being bombed and I remember one saying he stood there and all the melted chocolate from this factory was coming down the hill, running down the gutters and down the drains. He said it was like a chocolate river.

The Wireless

We had a wireless thanks to my clever brother, who made one. You had to have an accumulator which had to be taken to the garage to be charged. I used to hate doing that because the garage didn't like doing it as it took a lot of their time, I think. We used to listen to the dance bands led by Henry Hall and Jack Payne. I'd been away staying with my grandfather and aunts at Worthing and when I came back, I remember my sister saying as we walked across the common all about this radio and how you could get these dance bands. During the war, the news at 9 o'clock was an absolute must; you wouldn't miss it for anything. My aunts and grandfather said we will all listen to it and think of each other listening to it, so we'd be together as a family at 9 o'clock, as we were all separated. So, it played an important part in our lives during the war.

Rationing

If you went out, you had these British restaurants. I remember they cost 1/6 a lunch and you had potatoes, vegetables of some sort, whatever meat they could get (you were very lucky if you got spam in those days) and a pudding like jam pudding. It was very good value and that helped with the rationing. My mother somehow always produced Sunday roast – we wouldn't have dreamt of not having roast on a Sunday evening, even if it was only a little bit. There were seven of us in the family until people started getting called up so we put all the rations together. I think our mothers had the hardest part, trying to feed a family, but we never went without meals.

Mary Edington

Prestbury Memorial Trust

It was just over a month ago we gave news in this publication we were continuing to save for our replacement Minibus since our present vehicle was approaching the day of reckoning; well in a manner of speaking.

The news this month is ... we have just this week received delivery of a replacement Minibus …. Hooray ….. We are so pleased with our acquisition. If this vehicle serves us as well as the retired one then we will be well pleased. This all seems to have occurred fairly rapidly but then that is how things happen in life.

Our Minibus leads a busy but useful life in our local community and brings much help to folk who for whatever reason require the mobility they lack themselves. In a word ... it can be described as a Lifesaver!

All the above is the culmination of much work on the part of our Trustees and very valuable VOLUNTEERS. What would we do without them one wonders?

In conclusion, the Trustees wish to say a massive THANKYOU to all the many, many, mostly local populace who have given generously to the fund that was established expressly to accumulate monies to fund our Minibus. Without this external funding there would not be a Bus.

Nigel Woodcock
Transport Committee. Member

Marle Hill WI

Marle Hill WI as with most WI's did not meet in August. Instead we had a trip organised by the committee to London. We had a coach which deposited some of us at Hampton Court with the rest going onto to the Chelsea Barracks and gardens. We all had a wonderful day.

Marle Hill met on Monday 1 September where our speaker was Adrain Moss who gave a very interesting and informative presentation on the works of the Commonwealth War Graves. It made us all think about the thousands of men and women buried over all parts of the world.

We will meet again on Monday 6 October when our speaker will be Alexandra Stanbrook whose talk is entitled Hilarious Hats.

Our meals out, knit and natter, social events are beginning to be arranged.

Do come and visit us and see what you are missing and have some "Me time" with like-minded ladies. We meet at 7:30pm at St Nicolas Church.

Sue Davies Marle Hill WI

HARVEST FESTIVAL

Do join us for this most joyful of celebrations with the churches filled with beautiful harvest flowers! If you would like, please bring along a gift of produce or long-life foods to any of our services and these will be given to Caring for Communities and People (CCP) who support those in our area who are struggling and rely on food banks. Thank you.

The Brownies will be in St Nicolas and will entertain you. There will also be Harvest refreshments for all to enjoy.

Evening Services at St Mary's Prestbury

Over the summer we trialled an earlier start time for Sunday evening services and now we have settled on the following 'programme'

1st Sunday	6.30pm Evening prayer in Capel Court
2nd Sunday	6.00pm Benediction in church
All other Sundays	6.00pm Evening prayer in church

Forthcoming Events

HARVEST celebrations

5 October 2025 at the usual service times in our team churches.

Please consider bringing harvest gifts for the less fortunate.

Welcome on Wednesday

Wednesday, 15 October at **2.30pm in the St Nicolas Room**. There will be home-made cakes, tea or coffee for £2 and the chance to meet friends and have a friendly chat. So please come along, maybe bringing a neighbour?

Bereavement Friendship Group

We will be meeting in St Mary's Church, Prestbury on Monday 20 October at 2.15-4pm

If you have lost a loved one and would like to talk to others in a similar situation, please come along. You will be most welcome, whether you are new or have come before.

Light refreshments will be provided. *Marion Povey*

Friends of St Mary's Prestbury

Whisky Tasting at The Royal Oak

6 Whiskies will be Available to Try
An Expert will Introduce each one
Cheese and Biscuits & Fruit Cake
Wednesday 12 November 2025
7.00pm Royal Oak, The Burgage
Tickets £25
Contact: Helen Eagger
WhatsApp/Text 07765 903406

TIMES OF REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES

St Mary's Church, Prestbury

Sunday		0800	Said Eucharist
	1st Sunday	0930	Breakfast Celebrate! – All-age worship
	Other Sundays	0900	Breakfast Celebrate! at Infant School
		1100	Sung Eucharist
	1st Sunday	1830	Evening Prayer at Capel Court
	2nd Sunday	1800	Benediction
	Other Sundays	1800	Evening Prayer
Thursday		1030	Said Eucharist

St Nicolas Church, Prestbury

Sunday		0930*	Sung Eucharist
Tuesday		1000	Said Eucharist

All Saints Church, Pittville

Sunday		0800	Holy Mass
		1030*	Solemn Mass
	1st & 3rd Sunday	1730	Choral Evensong and Benediction
	Other Sundays	1730	Evening Prayer and Benediction
Wednesday		1830	Holy Mass
Thursday		1115	Holy Mass
Friday		1200	Holy Mass
Saturday	1st Saturday	1000	Holy Mass for Our Lady of Walsingham

St Lawrence Church, Swindon Village

Sunday	1st Sunday	0930	Family Communion
		1700	Evensong
	2nd Sunday	0930	BCP Holy Communion
	3rd Sunday	0930	Holy Communion
		1700	Evensong
	4th Sunday	0930	Holy Communion
	5th Sundays	1000	Benefice Holy Communion alternates with St Mary Magdalene

St Mary Magdalene Church, Elmstone Hardwicke

Sunday	1st Sunday	1100	BCP Holy Communion
	2nd Sunday	1100	Family Service (no communion)
	3rd Sunday	1100	Holy Communion
	4th Sunday	1100	Holy Communion
	5th Sunday	1000	Benefice Holy Communion alternates with St Lawrence
Wednesday	2nd Wednesday	1900	Celtic Evening Prayer
Thursday	4th Thursday	1900	Celtic Communion

* These services are usually streamed on the internet. These and other services are recorded so may be accessed live or later on the Team's YouTube page -

https://www.youtube.com/NorthCheltenhamTeamMinistry/streams

Parish Directory *continued*

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St Nicolas Hall, Swindon Lane
hallhire@northchelt.org.uk

Parish Giving Scheme
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info@parishgiving.org.uk

Copy Dates and Themes for Future Magazines 2025

Issue	Copy Date	Theme
November	Sunday 12 October	Avenues
Dec / Jan	Sunday 16 November	New Year

Prestbury Parish Magazine is usually published on the last Sunday of the month. The copy date is usually the Sunday 2 weeks before this, but there may be scope for some flexibility.

Copy may be sent in a clearly marked envelope to 'Prestbury Parish Magazine'
2 Honeysuckle Close, Prestbury, Cheltenham, GL52 5LN
or preferably by email to **magazine@prestbury.net**

November 2025 Magazine Theme: Avenues

Please send copy by Sunday 12 October 2025
or soon after

THE ROYAL OAK
CHELTENHAM

AWARD-WINNING FOOD

CASK ALE, CRAFT BEER & CIDER

BEAUTIFUL BEER GARDEN

Planning an event or party?

Ask us about
The Pavilion, our versatile
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royaloakprestbury.co.uk

royaloakprestbury@butcombepubs.com

01242 522344

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The Royal Oak, The Burgage, Prestbury,
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