

Five Alive

The Magazine of the Redruth Team Ministry
St Euny Redruth, Christchurch Lanner, St Andrew Pencoys
St Andrew Redruth and St Stephen Treleigh



OCTOBER 2024

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Email:- magazine@redruthchurch.org.uk

Team Clergy		CHURCH WARDENS—REDRUTH PCC	
Rebecca Bell—Team Rector		St Andrew Redruth	
revbeccabell@gmail.com	07899 639068	Lez Seth	01209 215191
		Jeff Saville—Deputy	01209 219059
Chris Harrigan—Curate		St Euny	
Redruthcurate@gmail.com	07981 816361	Andy Watts	07788 828109
Peter Fellows		St Andrew Pencoys	
Baptism66@gmail.com	07903807946	Brian Gannaway	01209 214069
		Sheila Gannaway—Deputy	ditto
Lay Readers		Christchurch—Lanner	
Jim Seth	01209 215191	Mary Anson	01209 211087
Jason Hoole-Jackson	07866 391952	St Stephen Treleigh	
Electoral Roll Officer		Mary Harris	01209 214117
Nigel Pearce	01209 217596	Anne Youlton—Deputy	01209 214532
PCC Treasurer		PCC Secretary	
Richard Robinson	01209 715198	Jill Tolputt	07809 043656
Magazine Editor/Treasurer		Parish Nursing	07894 490661
Richard & Rosemary Robinson	01209 715198	Anya Dolling	
magazine@redruthchurch.org.uk		Parishnurseredruth@gmail.com	
St Andrew's Crypt—Hire		Pencoys Church Hall—Hire	
Lez Seth	01209 215191	Christine Walker	01209215850
Lanner Church Hall—Hire		Treleigh Church Hall—Hire	
Margaret Davies	01209 214470	Carol Stewart	07850 990605
Bell Tower Captain		St Euny Church Hire	
Ian Self	i.self@cornishchurches.com	Andy Watts	07788 828109

Enquiries Concerning Weddings and Baptisms

Please email Revd Chris Harrigan: redruthcurate@gmail.com or tel: 07981 816361

Benefice Office and Weekly Prayer Sheet

Administrator inc. weddings: Simon Cooper: Tel office 01209 200739 (please leave a message)

E-mail: enquiries@redruthchurch.org.uk

Benefice Website: <http://www.redruthchurch.org.uk>

Parish Safeguarding Lead: J.Seth@btinternet.com

FIVE ALIVE MAGAZINE

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I'm two weeks in and still smiling!!

Thank you so so much for the incredibly warm welcome that I and the family have received since arriving in Redruth. I do not say this lightly, but it really feels as if we have come home. The younger two are thriving at school so far, eldest is enjoying college, and husband is exploring some job options. And I am really enjoying gradually getting to know folk, and finding my way around. (I still seem to only get to Treleigh the long way round, but at least I get there!!)

There is lots about this move that means it is easier than previous moves have been (And I've moved a LOT!). It is my second incumbency, so I know better the changes that you will be experiencing as you get used to me, as well as me to you. I know to pace myself as I start out, and to spend lots of time listening without rushing in with ideas and solutions. I know my 3 predecessors! I know they were all incredibly gifted and capable men, but I also know they are different to me, so I am confident God has called me here to bring my unique gifts and perspective for this next season.

And I have felt very much called by God. I started looking for jobs during summer of 2023, and applied for 3 before being successful here. I even venture to say that if I had seen Redruth advertised last summer, I would not have applied. But God took me on a journey (with lots of soul searching and disappointment, as well as some relief!) which meant that by February I could not imagine myself anywhere but here. And isn't that so often how God leads us on this pilgrim life?

There is little in our lives that ever remains static, but all through the change we see God's love and purpose weaving through.

I am really excited to see where God leads us next. The opportunities in our midweek gatherings, warm space, social groups, TOAST, and the wonderful welcome at our Sunday worship, is so encouraging. God is already doing so much, and so are you.

Over the next few months I will be inviting everyone to be part of conversations and prayer as we map out our priorities for the next few years. It may be a process that leads us to celebrate what we have and continue as we are, or we may discern some tweaks and changes, and possibly some new opportunities. But I ask that you join in this journey in whatever way you are able. And especially by praying.

I want to end by saying a HUGE thank you to everyone who managed things so very well during the transition. I can't begin to express how grateful I am for the way in which folk were determined that I be welcomed, and things be prepared well for me. Thank you. And thank you for caring so well for the churches, especially those of you who stepped out of retirement or who stepped up into new ministries. You are a brilliant bunch here in Redruth Parish!!

Becca Bell
Team Rector

We Are All Leaders

What a year it has been! We now welcome our new Rector and look forward to the season ahead. It has been a challenging yet rewarding year, filled with opportunities for growth and learning, sometimes difficult, yet ultimately meaningful. Through it all, we are grateful for the journey and the blessings that came along the way. This is a time to continue learning and growing, which brings to mind Psalm 73:24-25: "You guide me with your counsel, leading me to a glorious destiny. Whom have I in heaven but you? I desire you more than anything on earth."

Reflecting on this Sunday's Gospel reading from Mark, where Jesus asks, "Who do people say that I am?", it prompts deeper questions about identity and purpose. The past year has been a journey of navigating change, adapting to new responsibilities, and remaining flexible amidst an evolving environment. It has been a real time of growth, much like the process of learning and adapting to challenges. Like Jesus' disciples, we've had moments of questioning and learning, but also moments of revelation and deeper understanding of our shared mission.

However, this morning's prayer reflected on Solomon, a powerful figure who was offered anything and chose wisdom. It makes me wonder how different our world would be if leaders consistently chose wisdom over power. How would society and the Church look if it prioritized justice and humility? As I look back on the past year, it's clear that leadership and growth are not just about individual efforts, but collective ones as Solomon wasn't wise alone but wise through God.

As we move forward, it is clear that leadership is shared, not carried by one individual alone. We are all leaders. Regardless of our titles or roles, we influence those around us and are responsible for acting justly in our communities. We are also reminded of the importance of supporting those in leadership, helping them stay the course in their calling. We are called to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God and with each other.

May we all commit ourselves to supporting our new Rector and her family with love, prayer, and encouragement, as we journey together into the new season. God bless.

Revd Chris Harrigan

THE STORY OF OLIVER BUTTON

At the beginning of the new school year, I always tell the same story in a primary school assembly. There's a new year six, and a new reception class. Returning children have a new teacher and new expectations.

Perhaps it was a little like that at Rebecca's licensing. A new start, new challenges, new expectations on us all. The story of Oliver Button may help us all to turn from the past and embrace the present and the future.

Oliver Button wanted to be a dancer. His classmates wanted to be football players, gymnasts, athletes; but Oliver Button wanted to be a dancer. He was laughed at, his feet were stamped on, he was called names. But Oliver did not give up. He kept going to his dance classes and worked on his leaps, spins and foot patterns. Then, one day in his village a poster appeared advertising a 'grand talent show'. Oliver entered. He knew, if he won, the bullies would be silenced. On the day of the show, Oliver was up against a pianist, a magician and a fire-eater. There were three prizes and the four competitors did their very best. Oliver danced as well as he could, but he could see, in the audience, the bullies were laughing and pointing at him.

*When the judges gave the results, the magician was third, the pianist second and the fire-eater first. Oliver was nowhere, he was last. The next day Oliver tried to avoid school but he had to go. As he got near the school gates he could see the bullies lined up against the wall. Feeling sick, Oliver walked towards them. When he was very close, the line of bullies parted, and, on the school wall was a poster: **OLIVER BUTTON IS A STAR!!** The leader of the bullies came to Oliver and held out his hand: "We are sorry" he said "You were great, let's work together"*

May we all work together, recognising God's love in all people, letting old problems and arguments fade away and rejoice in the new chances that Rebecca will bring to us.



ST ANDREW REDRUTH

The Red Blanket (Part 3)

Sally instinctively reached out to touch the blanket and was surprised at how soft it felt. She ran her hand over it, touching the delicate tasselling. It seemed almost warm and inviting, so much so that she had to fight off the urge to throw it around her shoulders! She quickly pulled her hand away and hurried towards the Church door in the hope the young man might still be around. There was no sign of him. She checked the porch. The spear head and shaft were gone.

Old John was busy pulling on his ancient but well loved sweater. The sun had gone in and the Church was reacting, as it always did, turning chilly almost at once. "Ready?" he called to Sally noticing that she looked somewhat distracted, not present. "Everything ok?" he asked. Sally pointed to the blanket. "Our visitor left this behind." Old John ambled over to Sally. "Looks like just an old blanket to me, shouldn't worry too much about that. Anyway, if it's that important he will probably be back for it. The church is open all day. I'd leave it, just in case." Sally shrugged. "you're the boss." They both laughed knowing that Old John had been Church Warden for a very long time, probably too long.

Day after day, week after week the red blanket sat, neatly folded, on the pew, unclaimed. Sally often glanced at it as she passed, remembering it's tall, dark owner and silently hoping that one day perhaps he would return.

The sun had already lost its warmth and Autumn was shaking the leaves from the trees when the heating in the church just gave up the ghost. After various engineers visited it was pronounced completely dead and defunct. Jerry, the Vicar broke the news to the congregation. "Afraid it's a matter of wrap up warm for a time until we can work out the best way forward. It's going to cost, I'm afraid, a pretty penny to install a new system and of course there's also the matter of where the money will come from. However, in the meantime I would suggest we all shuffle up close together and get to know each other a little better!" There were a few giggles, a few pulled faces but most of all the congregation just accepted it as if they were being told nothing worse than the outside toilet key was missing.

The following Sunday dawned with a wintery chill in the air. Sally was already wearing her gloves and scarf and not likely to take them off during the service, if she could help it. Debs arrived with her two small boys and a friend with a new baby. They went to their usual pew and settled, as best they could, with two small, rather boisterous boys and a somewhat fractious baby. Sally noticed that the baby continued to cry throughout the service and that mum appeared to be getting rather anxious. Sally quietly slipped in beside them saying nothing but just extended her arms towards the baby. Mum looked relieved. Without thinking, Sally picked up the old, soft, red blanket and gently tucked it around the little bundle that was Charlie. Almost immediately the baby stopped crying and, after a struggle to find it's mouth, quietly sucked it's thumb until it fell fast asleep in Sally's arms.

Sally became aware that she was no longer chilled to the bone but in fact glowing with a warmth that felt as if she too had been wrapped up in some cosy, soft cocoon. For a brief moment in time Sally felt a peace and contentment like no other. She wanted it to last forever.

Later, when Charlie had been carefully and gently returned to his Mother and the service had ended, Sally found herself sitting alone in her pew, the well used and slightly threadbare red blanket draped over her knees. She touched it, almost with a reverence. There was something special about this blanket, of that she was sure.

Pie Louis-Smith (to be continued)

St. Andrew Pencoys with Four Lanes Methodist Church

'FLAPJACK'

Worshipping, praying and working together as 'One in Christ'

St. Andrew's Church remains open daily from about 10am until 4pm with optional Covid-safe precautions in place.

What a wonderful occasion it was! At last our new Rector has arrived, and her welcoming and licensing service on 2 September was a most enjoyable evening for everyone. We wish her great joy in her ministry with us and pray that our work together will be happy and fruitful. We also wish her family, husband Wes, and sons Daniel, Joseph and Reuben, a positive and rewarding future as they settle into their new lives in Redruth. Thank you for giving up your 'old lives' for us!

We thank everyone who supported our First Sunday Evening Event on Sunday 1 September, when £125 was raised for the Trewirgie School Bread appeal. Your loyalty to these events is so appreciated. The next Event will be our Bring & Share **Harvest Supper in Pencoys Hall** on **Sunday 6 October at 6pm** to which everyone will be very welcome.

Flapjack services and events during **October** will be:

Said Holy Communion each Wednesday at 6pm at St. Andrew's, Pencoys

Saturday 5 October : Quiz, Pencoys Hall 7pm

Sunday 6 October : Flapjack Holy Communion Service 11.15am Methodist Church
Lighthouse 3 - 5pm Methodist Church
First Sunday Evening Event, Harvest Supper (see above).

Sunday 13 October : Flapjack Family Event with Holy Communion 11.15am.
St. Andrew Pencoys

Saturday 19 October : Games Evening (Bingo) 6–8pm Pencoys Hall

Sunday 20 October : Service of the Word 11.15am Methodist Church
Holy Communion 6pm St. Andrew Pencoys

Saturday 26 October : Bangers & Mash Methodist Church from 11am.

Sunday 27 October : **Parish Holy Communion** Four Lanes Methodist Church 10.30am.
Teatime Celebration, Pencoys Hall 4–5pm.

We send our warmest wishes and congratulations to Mel and Christine Walker as they celebrate their Diamond (60th!) Wedding Anniversary on 26 September. What an achievement! They will be holding an open Tea Party on **Sunday 29 September** and welcome anyone who would like to join them at the Methodist Church, between 2pm and 4pm. They have asked for no presents, but voluntary donations to the work of the Macmillan Nurses will be welcome. We also send our congratulations to Lucie (R) who will be commissioned as a Lay Pioneer Minister on Sunday 6 October in Carbis Bay, and are sorry we shall be unable to join her (it clashes with our Harvest Supper), but will pray for her wonderful vocation. We shall miss her that evening, as she has always attended our Harvest Supper!

The Wednesday Social Afternoons continue at Four Lanes Methodist Church on 9 and 23 October from 2pm to 4pm when all are welcome.

Jill Tolputt

ST EUNY

Our final Cream Tea of the season was held on Saturday 31st August and was a great social gathering. We used up the last of our cake cream and splits, with just enough for the last order. Thanks go to Sarah and Andy who led on the organisation of this popular event.

We now look forward to the Mining and Pasty Festival and our service on Sunday Morning. Anyone who wishes to take part in the walk should meet at the Basset Stamps at 10.30am on Sunday 22nd September and be prepared for a little damp underfoot. The church service will start at around 11.15-11.30am, when the walkers arrive. Pasties and saffron buns have been ordered for lunch, so please do join in if you can. We are hoping that there might be some Mexican visitors, this being the bicentenary of the Cornish miners going to Mexico to open up the silver mines after the country's independence. Some of the St Euny burials include people who made up part of the Cornish Diaspora in Mexico.

Harvest will be celebrated on the first Sunday of October in our church services, when St Euny will join with St. Stephen's at Treleigh. We will, however, be decorating the church for harvest and opening for donations for harvest, to be given to Food Bank. On Friday 11th October we will be hosting a Harvest Supper, for the whole parish. This will consist of casseroles (vegetarian option included) and baked potatoes with pudding. Pip, will be giving us a short talk and there will be singing of harvest hymns between courses. We have decided to postpone an event with Red River Singers, as advertised last month. Please do come along if you can. There is no fixed price for food, donations are welcome and will be shared between the church and the charity Water-Aid.

Looking ahead we will be holding two wreath-making Saturdays in December, on 7th & 14th from 12-3.00pm. As in previous years there will be stalls and refreshments, to include soups and mince pies.

Many people comment on the calming and uplifting sound of St Euny bells. Here is an extract from the Royal Cornwall Gazette of 1879:

On Monday I took a walk all the way to Higher Sentry to hear the music of Saint Uny bells. What a pity, thought I, that some means cannot be devised to bring the town of Redruth a little nearer the Church and tower. The bells now make melody for the special benefit of the departed Druids, the whole of the town being deprived the while of the intense pleasure this jingle affords.

Long may it continue – and if you know of anyone interested in bell-ringing, please do encourage them to contact Ian Self, our Tower Captain, contact details on the weekly sheet.

Linda Beskeen

CHRISTCHURCH LANNER



Christchurch remains open 10.00am– 4.00pm and Holy Communion is celebrated each Sunday at 9.30am. The third Sunday is a Communion with new music and each Wednesday there is a Prayer Book Communion There Service at 11.00am. *Although the 'vacancy' has ended, the LAST Sunday of each month will continue to revolve through the SIX worship settings and starts at 10.30am. In addition, the FIRST Sunday of each month will alternate between the settings with their Sunday Service at the same time:*

ST ANDREW, REDRUTH & CHRISTCHURCH, LANNER / 9.30am

ST EUNY, CHURCHTOWN & ST STEPHEN, TRELEIGH / 11.15am

THE FLAPJACK COMMUNITY (St Andrew, Pencoys & Four Lanes Chapel) are already linked at 11.15am.

THE CHRISTCHURCH SUPPER CLUB: Christchurch enjoys a SUPPER CLUB every three months. There is always lots of food etc. brought by the guests and a good time, by candlelight is had by all. The next Supper Club date is: **SATURDAY OCTOBER 12**

OTHER EVENTS AT CHRISTCHURCH: *Margaret's Last Monday Tea Party 2.00pm – 4.00pm.* Home-made cake and lots of chat!! The next tea party is on **MONDAY SEPTEMBER 30: 2pm – 4pm.** If you miss this one, then how about **MODAY OCTOBER 28.** You will be very welcome.

CHRISTCHURCH FIRST SUNDAY EVENTS: Looking ahead, the next First Sunday Event in Christchurch is on **SUNDAY NOVEMBER 3 at 6.00pm which will be a 'remembering service' within the Octave of All /Saints / All Souls.**

WE ARE SO GRATEFUL!! One Sunday in September, we met James and Stefan. They were two paramedics who came to church with their ambulance to care for a member of the congregation who 'collapsed'. Before James and Stefan arrived, the whole congregation did all that they could to work together to bring about a full recovery. **WELL DONE, YOU WERE ALL STARS!!**



With God's blessings to the parish, and to Rebecca as she is now our Rector

ST STEPHEN TRELEIGH



I was privileged as Churchwarden from Treleigh to be part of the procession at St Andrews as we welcomed the Rev Becca Bell as our new priest. First in the procession was the Crucifer followed by the Choir, Lay Readers and Licensed Lay Workers. Then came the visiting Clergy, Ministers and Ecumenical Representatives. Next came the Clergy and Readers of the Parish followed by the Cathedral Canons, then followed The Patron with the Incumbent Designate, Rural Dean and Lay Chair. Lastly the Archdeacon, Churchwardens and Bishop Hugh. Later in the service each Warden in turn escorted the Rev Becca and Bishop Hugh to different points around the church where articles relating to each point for example a Bible at the Pulpit, and a Jug of Water at the Font were presented to the Rev Becca. A wonderful service enjoyed by all who were there and the refreshments after in the crypt where everyone was able to welcome our new priest. After a break during the school holidays, we resumed our 2nd Tuesday tea party last month. As with the very first tea party we held in September last year we again held a Macmillan Tea Party in aid of the Macmillan Cancer Support Fund. As usual we were well supported by the parents and children from the school. A total of £145 was collected on the day with more to come from those unable to attend. Our next event is on the 8th October and everyone is welcome to join us.

The Parish service this month is with us at Treleigh at 10.30 on the 29th September. A service where everyone in the Parish can join with our friends from the other churches to worship together. Refreshments will be served in the hall after the service.

The following Sunday we have our Harvest Festival which will be a joint service with our friends from St Euny. We welcome gifts of tinned and packet foods which will be donated to the food bank.

Now for the sad news

On Monday the 9th of September less than a week before her 90th birthday Joy Pedley joined the Angels in heaven after many months in hospital. A loyal member of the Treleigh congregation, Joy took on the job of Churchwarden at the APCM a role left vacant following the sudden death of her beloved husband Bill. I am told that Joy held the post for at least 10 years and during that time held coffee mornings to raise funds for the church continuing as she and Bill had together. The Station of the Cross pictures in the church were given to us by Joy and Marlene Williams and they continue to be part of our Easter Worship. Our sincere condolences go to Brett and Mark along with her grandchildren and many great grandchildren. Rest in peace Joy, you will be missed by us all at Treleigh.

Mary Harris

LAY PIONEER

Lucie would like to thank everyone who has supported her during her training to become commissioned as a Lay Pioneer, particularly the willing group of volunteers, who starred in videos and focus groups, and the PCC.

The formal commissioning service of lay leaders will be on Sunday 6th October at 4pm at St Kea Church, Truro TR3 6AE led by the Archdeacon. It would mean a lot to Lucie to have your support there.

After being commissioned, Lucie will have the title of Lay Pioneer. Their work is with groups who feel isolated, and those on the edges. Their role is to meet and to walk alongside people where they are and see where God is working, and to be based within the community in which they find themselves so that, together, they might encounter where the Holy Spirit is already at work. Please do ask about this work when you see Lucie as they continue to be a valued part of the worshipping community in and around all the Redruth Churches, and as a member for the Laity of Truro Diocesan Synod.

Lucie is one of three people from her year group to have been approved by the Diocese of Truro to continue their study towards becoming a Licenced Lay Pioneer, which is the same level of qualification as a Licenced Lay Reader. This will be through the Church Mission Society, affiliated with the University of Durham.

If anyone feels that they would like to learn more about the Pioneering ministry, and whether it is something that you feel called to explore, please contact Lucie on Lucierogers28@gmail.com for a chat.

Recruitment is currently underway for the new certificate group to begin in January 2025.

Please note the change of venue from St Anta and All Saints to St Kea Church, Kea, Truro



LAY PIONEER—LUCIE ROGERS
The Commissioning Service for Lucie will be on
Sunday 6 October at 4pm
at
St Kea Church, Kea, Truro
led by the Archdeacon

PLEASE NOTE VENUES FOR 1st SUNDAY in OCTOBER and NOVEMBER

OCTOBER 6 HARVEST FESTIVAL

9.30	Christchurch Lanner with St Andrew Redruth	Holy Communion
11.15	St Stephen Treleigh with St Euny	Holy Communion
11.15	Four Lanes Chapel	Holy Communion
18.00	Pencoys Hall	First Sunday Event Harvest Supper

November 3

9.30	St Andrew Redruth with Christchurch Lanner	Holy Communion
11.15	St Euny Redruth with St Stephen Treleigh	Holy Communion
11.15	Four Lanes Chapel	Holy Communion
18.00	Four Lanes Chapel	First Sunday Event Remembering/The Children of Nepal

PARISH SERVICE LAST SUNDAY in OCTOBER & November

27 October

10.30	Four Lanes Chapel	Holy Communion
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24 November

10.30	Christchurch Lanner	Holy Communion
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It is a great joy and blessing when we share in worship together and take time for a cuppa afterwards. Don't forget to offer transport to those who need a little encouragement to visit another church and to ease parking.

On behalf of the Ministry Team

Revd Margaret

THANK YOU ALL for the thank you

What a surprise to be presented with a thank you gift from the parish when Revd Becca was inducted and installed as our new Rector – after all it was her day. The dish, hand made by Sarah Sullivan at Red Pottery is lovely with a beautiful inscription – *Margaret. Thank you for keeping us together. 2024*

I really don't deserve to be singled out because the ministry team all worked hard and worked together throughout the transition but thank you on their behalf too.

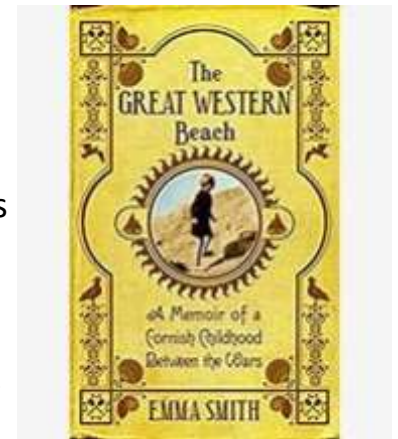
Margaret

BOOK CLUB



Jojo Moyes fascinating novel *Someone Else's Shoes* was a delight to read with plenty of humorous events throughout – even the very beginning with the accidental 'swap' of gym bags from where the whole story developed. Sam and Nisha took a while to meet up and didn't like one another at all but ended up working together with friends to pay back Nisha's husband. All tied up in the mystery of the high heeled red shoes. What a difference they made to Sam who had to wear them and to Nisha who couldn't because Sam picked up the wrong bag. Who would have thought clothes and shoes could make such a difference to the lives of both women. Well worth the read! Look out for it on St Andrew's Book Club Shelves.

The Great Western Beach is completely different – a memoir of a Cornish childhood between the wars by Emma Smith. Set between 1923 and 1935 it tells of times in Newquay with its eccentric residents and exotic holiday makers, its tennis tournaments and bathing parties, invigorating walks and teas at the Rose Cafe. This is the world of the Hallsmith's children, Pam and Jim the twins and younger sister Elspeth who is the narrator. It is written with enormous love and a gentle caustic wit, generating an atmosphere hauntingly different from the usual run of childhood reminiscences. Will we recognise the Newquay of today?



The following book is *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles described as 'a sleight of hand' by The New York Times. Each of the book's chapters is set according to a doubling then halving of chronological structure! Your guess is as good as mine.

NB Our next meeting will be on Monday 30th September because of my commitments but hopefully after that we will meet on the first Monday of each month at 10.00am. Perhaps the new day will make it easier for you to join us? Please ring me on 07930 471837 for further information.

Margaret Saville

HEALING SERVICE – YES IT IS FOR YOU!

Healing Services have been taking place in the Parish of Redruth for a long time now so it is surprising that few people attend, especially when these take place in each of our churches in rotation. Fr Peter and I are mystified as to why.

All of us are in need of healing in many different ways. There are many among us in our communities who are suffering in body, mind or spirit who would benefit from the peace and quietness of this service. Yes, we might not see dramatic healings (but you never know what God will do!) but those who come do experience a wonderful blessing and may indeed recognise healing has occurred but do not mention it, it is after all, very personal.

There is no expectation to participate in the laying on of hands and anointing whilst quiet prayer is said, if anyone wishes to come and just absorb the blessing of peace and stillness. You may come for yourself or for someone you are concerned about wherever they may live. You may or may not want to say why you have come, again there is no obligation. You may wish to bring someone but are not sure what either of you will make of it. You may come only once or regularly but rest assured it is an opportunity to just **be**, in the presence of God, being open to the healing love of Jesus.

Why not give healing a try and if you have any concerns please do speak with Fr Peter or me, we are only too happy to allay your fears and worries, and if there is a specific reason you don't come we would like to hear it.

Our healing services are on the 1st Tuesday of each month: September 3rd at St Andrew Pencoys, October 1st at St Andrew Redruth, November 5th at Christchurch Lanner and December 3rd at St Euny.

Revd Margaret

Venues for our Joint Parish Services

2024

October	27	Four Lanes Chapel
November	24	Christchurch Lanner
December	29	St Andrew Redruth

2025

January	27	St Euny
February	24	St Stephen Treleigh

FROM THE REGISTERS

BAPTISM

23 August	2024	Elijah James	St Andrew Redruth
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WEDDINGS

24 August	2024	William James Peter Rogers and Freya Miriam Ann Cloake	St Euny
31 August	2024	Gary John Palmer and Barbara Shirley Ringrose	St Andrew Pencoys
31 August	2024	Jacob George Butcher and Katie Louise Rose Thomas	St Andrew Redruth

FUNERAL

19 August	2024	Geraldine Laity	St Stephen Treleigh
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THE BISHOP OF TRURO DISCRETIONARY FUND

Following the licensing of Reverend Rebecca Bell at St Andrew's church, Redruth on Monday 2 September, a collection of £241.62 was raised for the above fund.

My way to Compostela

Day 13 Part 1

Villafranca de Montes de Oca to Cardeñuela - 25 Km

Villafranca roughly translates to “home of the Franks” who passed this way in the 9th Century on their pilgrimage and returned to settle in this area. The Spanish translation for Goose is Oca, so you could say that we stayed at an Alburgue “In the home of the Franks at the foot of Goose Mountain”. For the 9th Century pilgrims this would have been a place of danger from being robbed or murdered by the bandits who lived on the mountain, luckily for us we did not encounter any geese or bandits. As today’s walk started with a steady climb of over a 1000 metres and a total accumulated distance of 25Km we decided to make an early start and forgo breakfast. Leaving the Alburgue we turned right which took us immediately onto the route to climb steadily up through an Oak forest that in turn, gave way to Pine woods before we reached the Fuente de Mojapan (moisten bead fountain). I expect that early pilgrims would have softened their crust of bread at this point? From here we had a slightly less steep climb to reach the mountain plateau at 1020 metres and out into a wide Pine and Oak forest. After walking through the forest for around 2.3Km, we came to a picnic area and a Civil war monument. Monumento de los Caidos a chilling reminder of the fallen during the Spanish Civil war. We stopped here for a few minutes to read the inscription on the plaque, to drink our water and have a quick snack. Always have a fall-back snack in your pack, in Andrew’s case a whole month’s worth of snacks! As the others moved on I lingered to have a few more minutes of reflection, to say a prayer for my Father who fought in WW2 and who, like thousands of Irish men before him, left their homeland to fight for another country against Fascism and Dictatorship. I recalled one such survivor of the Spanish Civil War, a patient I was caring for when I worked at Tehidy Hospital in 1979. He too was an Irish man who in 1937 gave up his medical training to go and fight against oppression. I often thought of what he felt on his return to Ireland in late 1938 invalided home, minus his left arm, never to return to his medical studies. Sadly he died of TB associated with long term alcohol abuse. Joining up with the group again we descended steeply to cross the Arroyo Peroja stream by a footbridge then climbed up to the summit of Goose mountain at 1,150Metres. Hope you have remembered how to convert metres to feet? From here the track widens out as we continue for another 4.9Km before passing a wayside cross that served as the marker for our 3.6Km descent to the village of San Juan de Ortega with a population of around 20 souls, but most important to us, a bar/café and our designated breakfast stop. If any of you have ever seen the film ‘The Way’ with Martin Sheen, the scene in the film where he has his backpack stolen was filmed outside this bar, a far distance from the city it was supposed to represent! The Village bears the name of a disciple of Santo Domingo and like him he did great works for the pilgrims on this route, building hostels, hospitals and churches. San Juan is a designated stop in the Guide book if you have stayed in Belorado, but as you may remember we are making a point of not stopping in large towns or cities if we can avoid it, and in doing so we hope we are supporting the smaller towns, villages and hamlets. So after a sustaining late breakfast, that did not involve the traditional bread and garlic soup of this region, we headed out, back on the route that would take us towards Burgos.

Len Cunningham

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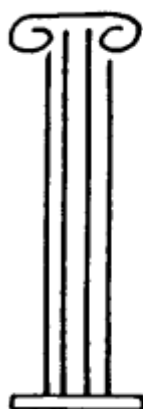


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