

St Leonard's Lexden



Ordinary people. Extraordinary God.



Parish Magazine

50p November 2018



Money - there's no need to blush!



When it comes to morality, the New Testament has considerably more to say about the dangers, abuses - and appropriate uses - of money than it has to say about almost anything else. And yet the Church often remains coy about bringing up a subject which – on the evidence of Paul's letters to Corinth – has been an uncomfortable issue for almost two thousand years!

The Apostle Paul can offer us reassurance, however. He writes about giving and sharing wealth by firmly placing money in its proper perspective – always considering it as *one* part of the broader abundance that God gives. Paul seeks not a bumper bank balance, but a 'fair balance' between the varied communities that made up the early Church – with their wildly different abundances and needs. Money is never the be all and end all to Paul. Yet it is very important because (*and only because*) it can be used to address need, and to support the many other gifts God has given. To Paul, the abundance of joy or prayer or generosity or service in materially poor communities is *never* considered a lesser abundance than money – quite the opposite, in fact.

Paul was never shy of deploying the art of persuasion, but when he asks individual Corinthians to consider what they might contribute to the collection for poor Christians he is absolutely clear that he seeks a 'voluntary gift' rather than 'extortion': 'each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion' (2 Cor 9.5,7).

So, if we put money in its proper perspective and keep aware of the danger of pressuring people to give, then we should be able to talk about money with confidence – and without blushing!

In a recent letter to the clergy of our Diocese, Bishop Stephen gave a starkly honest account of the Diocese's present financial position. He addressed an important issue, of which all of us in the Church should be

aware. The Bishop wrote that while ‘it is in so many ways a miracle of generosity and sacrificial giving that the diocese of Chelmsford is able to do all that it does, the hard truth of our financial situation is that we still face a shortfall on our general fund each year.’

This gap is primarily based on a shortfall in Parish Share collection of almost £1m last year. The Parish Share is the yearly amount of money that each parish is asked to contribute to support the cost of ministry and mission in the diocese.

‘We cannot go on like this indefinitely,’ the Bishop continues. ‘At the moment it is still possible to sell a vacant property here and there so as to balance the books. But this is clearly not a sustainable way of managing our finances.’

My experience at Bishops court was that it is certainly not the case that the Diocese is inefficient or wastes its money, nor that this is something that can be addressed through seeking quick efficiencies or rationalisations.

St Leonard’s has been scrupulous in paying our Parish Share for many years and in supporting many charities, and this is something in which to rejoice. But as a church and as individuals we are called to constantly consider how God might want to harness the gifts he has entrusted to us as stewards.

I want to encourage us all to consider the so-called “Parish Share” not as a quota to be met, but rather as the minimum we should contribute to support our struggling sister and brother churches across Essex and East London. For very many churches, gathering together Parish Share is incredibly difficult. It may well be that a tiny minority of churches are failing to pay Share for troubling reasons: we cannot judge, of course. My experience, however, is that the majority of those who can’t make their full contribution are faithful communities who simply do not have the means to pay the full amount. This is why the present Diocesan

Cover Photo

Our best ever Macmillan coffee morning in September

system anticipates that other churches will be generous beyond the Share asked of them in order to support such communities.

I believe we should consider whether St Leonard's might be one of those churches called to extend our generosity beyond our "Share".

To be able to do this we need to pay careful attention to our own giving, of course, and to careful stewardship of our finances here at St Leonard's. You may be interested to learn that over the past few years regular giving has fallen slightly, and that at present our general expenditure is greater than our income from regular giving. This is no criticism of anyone, nor of the church as a whole. Nor is there any need to panic, of course, but this is a situation that I want to share with you.

Perhaps the Bishop's letter provides a good moment, therefore, for each of us to reflect on our regular giving? To carefully consider what we might like to give willingly – *not* under duress *nor* undue pressure – to give thanks to God for all his abundance.

It could be that such reflection might lead you to reduce your financial giving, of course. It might well confirm that what you already give is right. Or, it may be that you feel you could increase your giving.

As I write, I am in the process of setting up our Direct Debit to St Leonard's through the wonderful Parish Giving Scheme. If you give regularly and are not already a member of the scheme, why not consider joining? Not only does it allow St Leonard's to reclaim gift aid much more quickly and simply, but it also allows each of us to ask that our contribution to St Leonard's is automatically increased by the rate of inflation each year. This saves a great deal of faff with calculators and editing standing orders! To sign up to the Parish Giving Scheme please speak to Tom Scrimgeour (toms scrimgeour@aol.com, telephone 574797).

So let's never approach the subject of money in fear nor with bullishness. Rather let's rejoice in our shared knowledge of

'the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.' (2 Cor 8:9)

Matt

DIARY FOR NOVEMBER

Thursday 1st

8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 3rd

8.30am Men's Breakfast in the Nicholls Room

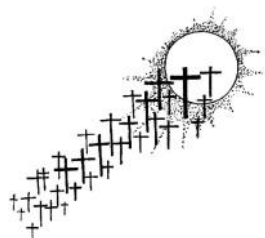
12.30 Friendship Lunch in church

SUNDAY 4th ALL SAINTS

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am All Age Eucharist

6.30pm Annual Memorial Service



Tuesday 6th

10.30am Holy Communion at Wren House

6.30pm Licensing & Installation of Fr David Armstrong as Priest in Charge at St Botolph without Bishopsgate, in London.

Wednesday 7th

10.00am Eucharist

10.45am Holy Communion at Woodlands

11.30am Holy Communion at Cheviot

Thursday 8th

8.00am Eucharist

2.30pm 'Constable' house group (Hugh 564577)

Saturday 10th

12.30pm Marriage of Daniel Burton and Sophie Squires



SUNDAY 11th: REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Parish Eucharist with Junior Church

10.55am Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial

6.30pm Service of Reflection for Remembrance Sunday

Tuesday 13th

2.30pm Mothers' Union in the Nicholls Room

Wednesday 14th

10.00am Eucharist

Thursday 15th

8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 17th

11.30 Company of Servers Chelmsford Chapter in Church

SUNDAY 18th: 2 Before Advent

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Parish Eucharist with Junior Church

6.30pm Evensong and Sermon

Monday 19th

11.00am Holy Communion at Hill House

Wednesday 21st

10.00am Eucharist

Thursday 22nd

8.00am Eucharist

SUNDAY 25th: CHRIST THE KING

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Parish Eucharist with Junior Church

6.30pm Evensong and Sermon

Wednesday 28th

10.00am Eucharist

Thursday 29th

8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 1st December

8.30am Men's Breakfast in the Nicholls Room

10.30am-1.30pm Christmas Bazaar in the Hall

Sunday 2nd December: ADVENT1

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am All Age Eucharist

6.30pm Advent Carol Service



Junior Church November



4th November	All Age Service
11th November	Do your duty? - Jesus is critical of the greed he sees in Jerusalem and its Temple. <i>Mark 12: 28-44</i>
18th November	Beyond destruction - Jesus predicts the complete destruction of the temple. <i>Mark 10: 33-45</i>
25th November	Through the looking glass - Kingship and its very different meanings. <i>Mark 10: 46-52</i>

Thank you

As most of you probably know Jenny and I celebrated our Silver Wedding Anniversary in September. We were blessed by receiving several cards from our Heavenly Father, who kindly sent them to us via his loving family at St. Leonard's. Thank you.

Love, Jenny and Tony.

P.S. I'm reminded of these words - 'All things come from you Lord.'

Didn't we do well!



Many thanks to everyone who supported our Macmillan coffee morning. Including gift aid we made a profit of £670.00 which far surpasses any of our previous totals so once again thank you for your generosity.

Judith

Newwhythe Hampers



You will have read in the September magazine and in the weekly notices that as in previous years, this Christmas we would like to make up gifts of hampers for the babies and their young parents living at Newwhythe, which is in our parish on London Road.

During November we will still be collecting any donations you are able to make of baby care products (NO Baby Powder please) and small luxury items like chocolates for the parents. A list of suggested items is in the weekly notices, or if you'd prefer to give Judith or the churchwardens a cash donation to help purchase what is needed, that is also fine!

Some of the residents may have few other presents or luxuries this Christmas, and we know how much they appreciate these hampers.

Thank you.

What on earth is a LDSSM?

We live in the age of the abbreviation. This is a triumph for the saving of ink, of course. However, it is often a tragedy for our understanding also. The Church has embraced this trend, of course. Where would we be without MMUs, the MPC, the PCC, or the APCM? All these abbreviations require some “unpacking”, but there are two that I’d like to clarify for us ASAP: one is SSM, the other is LDSSM. This is, of course, because our wonderful new curate, Viv, is an SSM – and in fact, an LDSSM.

SSM stands for self-supporting minister. This means that the minister offers their time and energies as a *gift* to the Church. This is a very great gift indeed, and something that entails considerable personal sacrifice both from the ministers themselves and also from their families.

Without the ministry of Self-Supporting Ministers, the Church of England as it is would (quite literally) collapse overnight. Self-Supporting Ministry is not some bolt-on, lower-category or second-class ministry, but a calling without which the church could not survive. All SSMs – including Viv – have absolute equality in their vocation to be a deacon (and then a priest) with every other ordained minister – whether a stipendiary¹ Priest-in-Charge like me, or Bishop Stephen, or Archbishop Justin!

When ‘LD’ is placed in front of ‘SSM’, it stands for ‘Locally Deployed’. This means that the minister’s calling (which is universal, of course) is at present expressed through a ministry to a particular locality. And for Viv, this is presently St Leonard’s and the surrounding area.

Perhaps it’s easiest to explain what this does *not* mean: it does *not* mean that Viv is a deacon (and eventually a priest) only when she is in Lexden! Viv is a deacon (and will be a priest) wherever she is: there is no distinction between an LDSSM and any other ordained minister in this respect. It’s just that, at present, her ministry is focussed exclusively in the context of St Leonard’s – and what a gift to the parish and surrounding area this is!

I hope this little clarification brings further into focus what a gift Viv is to our parish, so that we can be sure to fully appreciate and support her - and those who follow in her footsteps!

TTFN. **Matt**

¹Some ministers, including me, receive a “stipend”. This not a salary, but a payment that enables the minister to be exempt from salaried employment in order to undertake their ministry.

Goodbye, Father David



On 14th September we said goodbye to Father David, who had been our Assistant Curate for four and a half years, and who now is now moving on to his own parish in London. David preached a wonderful sermon (which can be heard on the St Leonard's website) and Matt said prayers for Fr David and Peter, blessing them in this next phase of their lives. There were gifts from individuals, from Junior Church and from the congregation as a whole, including a special collar for Freddie the Labrador. We have been greatly blessed by Fr David's ministry and will miss him and Peter, but wish them success and happiness in their new parish. Fr David, we will be visiting you at St Botolph's!

FRIENDSHIP LUNCH

**Our next Friendship Lunch
will be on**

Saturday 3rd November at 12.30pm.

**Please sign up on the list
at the back of the church.**





THE CAKE STALL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR 2018

Recently, I overheard someone say that there are about eighty days until Christmas Day – less by the time this article is in print – and even less until our Christmas Bazaar is held on the 1st December!!

St Leonard's ladies (and gentlemen) are to be applauded for their wonderful baking contributions for the recent Macmillan Coffee Morning and Flower Festival – not only the overall quantity that was received but the variety was simply amazing and the verbal appreciation received from visitors on your behalf was fantastic!

So, you know what I'm going to ask – please would you consider doing some more baking for the Cake Stall again this year? Cakes are, of course, always welcome but we mustn't forget the growing number of people who prefer a savoury morsel. Indeed, 'new ideas' will also be happily received – perhaps you make your own artisan bread?

Year on year we somehow manage to improve on the previous year and this is all down to you generous people giving of your time and talent. As I said last year, although we are 'The Cake Stall', donations cover a broad spectrum including (but not limited to) cakes, biscuits, savouries, jams and chutney, some purchased to be consumed before the day is out, others to be given as gifts.

Therefore, whatever your talent and fancy, please will you support us again this year?

Thank you,
Mary Hanmer

Owen's Cards

Owen Shepherd will be selling his handmade Christmas cards in church after the service on 18th November.

A New Lay Pastoral Assistant



A number of us from St Leonard's were delighted to be at a special service at Chelmsford Cathedral on 13th October, when, having completed her training, Margaret Smith was authorised as a Lay Pastoral Assistant by Bishop Stephen, along with eight others from around the diocese. Then on the following day Margaret was commissioned and welcomed by Matt in her official new role at St Leonard's. Margaret has already been serving faithfully during her training, and her ongoing ministry will be a blessing to the people in the parish.

SEBASTIAN WARNER

Framing

Unit 8, Kingsford
Business Centre,
Layer Rd, Colchester,
Essex, CO2 0HT

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Workshop: 01206 738700

Mob: 07787503397

Email: sebastianwarner
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*Please visit my website for  
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Free parking outside.*

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# Mouse Tails



October had been such a busy month, what with the installation of the new parish priest, who seemed very nice, the wedding of Pablo and Daisy and the Harvest Flower Festival feast, that Rupert, Molly and the other young Church mice felt that November was a bit flat. They had resumed their lessons with Grandpa and made a start on creating their Christmas cards and small gifts for the family. In fact the Mums and Dads were glad of a 'bit of a breather' before gearing up for Christmas.

Rupert remembered that Bonfire night would be happening soon; last year for the first time, the youngsters had built a small bonfire and made a Guy, and asked Grandpa if they would be allowed to do the same again. He didn't see why not but would check with parents. He also reminded them about the dangers of fireworks and of fire.

Once the parents had agreed, Rupert and Molly started to collect small branches and twigs to build their bonfire. Grandpa had decided where the safest place would be and when to do it, definitely not on November 5<sup>th</sup> because it would be too dangerous for the mice to be out, so it was agreed to hold their Bonfire party the following day. The mice collected all sorts of firework remains, sticks from rockets and sparklers, circles from Catherine Wheels etc. and from these along with straw and string they fashioned a Guy that did look vaguely like a human!



Quite a number of mice gathered for their little party, Grandpa did the honours and lit the bonfire and the young mice danced and sang around it. Mums held on tight to the youngest mice in case they got too excited and fell over (if truth be known all mice have a fear of fire but it was rather exciting too). Afterwards, in the warmth

of the Hall, they chatted about another event taking place at Sr. Leonard's, Remembrance Sunday. Grandpa suggested that they held their own service to remember and pray for their loved ones who were no longer with them. Then in the first weekend of December there would be the Bazaar,

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as in previous years the Hall mouse families would move down to stay with Church families over the weekend as it would be much safer for them than staying in the Hall. It was agreed who would stay where depending on who had the most space, the Balconies would take most of the Halls and the Under Stairs would take the rest. Rupert and Molly looked forward to having their cousins staying with them and started to plan what games they could play together; the Mums and Dads would just be happy to spend time together and decide what they were going to do for Christmas, this being their absolute favourite event of the year.

CT

## The Flower Festival



The Harvest Flower Festival, held during the first weekend of October, saw the church filled with beautiful arrangements, with cakes, and with people! All the hard work which had gone into it by the organisers, arrangers and caterers was appreciated by the many visitors who came, and their generous donations were given to the charity Christians Against Poverty. The limitations of space and printing mean that the many colourful arrangements cannot be shown here, but they may be seen in the gallery on the St Leonard's website. Well worth a look!

# Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

In October we listened to a most interesting and informative talk by Val Massey, entitled 'Musical Theatre'. Val gave us a wonderful résumé about the history of the musical, painting vivid pictures of actors, actresses and scenes from a variety of musicals which we have all seen and enjoyed at some stage in our lives.

## Janet Crees

At our meeting on **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> November** our speaker will be Mr Lawrence Dunn from Felsted. Lawrence is a retired Art teacher from St John's School in Billericay, a lecturer and author. His subject will be 'Victorian Art.'

This will be an open meeting and we will be pleased to welcome non-members at £2 per head, to include tea and biscuits. We do hope to have a good attendance, so please make a note of the date in your diaries.

## Jean Hallett

# Lexden Ladies' Group



At our October meeting we welcomed Lawrence Fryer Wood who gave a very interesting and humorous talk on his sometimes quite difficult life, especially as a child. It was fascinating to hear how he had overcome these difficulties, rising to a Major in the Army and a CEO in a company before working in the charitable sector. He felt it was by dealing with the 'little voice in our head' and had written a small booklet about this which many of us bought. He also performed some excellent impressions which were very entertaining.

We shall NOT now be meeting in November so our next meeting will be our Christmas lunch at the Cricketers on **Tuesday December 4<sup>th</sup>** and the joint Carol Service with MU on **Tuesday December 11<sup>th</sup>**.

## Sue Lewis

# Book Review



## ***AFTER THE FIRE : finding words for Grenfell*** **by Alan Everett**

In this very readable and moving book, Father Alan Everett, the vicar of St. Clement's, Notting Dale, the parish in which Grenfell Tower was situated, writes about the Grenfell Tower fire and its aftermath. In the words of the Bishop of Kensington, Graham Tomlin, 'The story of that terrible night and its aftermath is combined with profound reflections on the abiding value of faith and the parish system as part of the often undervalued bedrock of our social fabric.'

The book comprises 31 quite short chapters in 3 sections: Response, Reflection, Finding words, and concludes with a moving poem written by Fr. Alan. The first section is in the nature of a diary of the unfolding story, from the outbreak of the fire in the early hours of 14th June 2017 through the next few days weeks and months.

Fr. Alan's involvement began at 3.00am that morning when a neighbouring priest rang his doorbell and alerted him to the fire. When he reached St. Clement's, he opened the church, 'turned on the lights and lit the altar candles as a sign of God's presence and an invitation to prayer'. It was not long before other church members turned up and the church became a place of sanctuary, refuge and comfort.

There was a tremendous spontaneous outpouring of donations of clothing, toiletries, water etc. which turned the church into what someone described as 'the world's biggest jumble sale'.

Eventually, a sign had to be put up outside the church to say that no more donations could be accepted. Amongst items donated were 5 second hand fridges, of no use whatever for survivors living in temporary accommodation, and as a gesture of support, massively inappropriate given it was thought that a fridge had started the fire. Equally insensitive was the callous comment made to him that at least those in the tower and the bereaved were from countries where suffering is endemic: 'at least they're used to it'.

*(Continued on p27...)*

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In the 2nd section, reflection, Fr. Alan reflects theologically on the role of the parish church and the parish system as an expression of the Incarnation of God in Christ. He makes the point that many local people had a great affection for St. Clement's through 'key moments' in their lives: at baptisms, weddings and funerals and through having attended the church primary school.

I knew St. Clement's church over 50 years ago when, as a newly qualified solicitor working in London, I was a member of the vicarage 'family ' for some 15 months and became very involved in the life of the church and the parish.

St. Clement's, which celebrated its 150th anniversary last October, was a product of the Oxford movement, that amazing renewal of the Holy Spirit which helped to transform the life and worship of the Church of England in the 2nd half of the 19th century and inspired dedicated (and often heroic ) priests to go and work in some of the poorest parts of our big cities. I rejoice that St. Clement's maintains an outgoing, inclusive Anglo – catholic tradition in worship and mission and is truly a parish church.

**Hugh Beavan**

## **MAGAZINE DEADLINE**

*FINAL DAY* for items for the December edition:

**SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER**

Please submit items to the Editor  
email: [magazine@stleonardslexden.org.uk](mailto:magazine@stleonardslexden.org.uk)

Please include your name with any submission.  
Items from unknown sources cannot be used.

Please limit text to 500-600 words maximum.  
Longer articles may be edited. Thank you

St Leonard's Church

# CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December**  
**10.30 – 1.30**

Tombola Cakes  
Refreshments Raffle

Paperbacks Cards

Children's Games

Toys & Jigsaws

Gifts & Jewellery



All enquiries to Tom & Kathleen  
Scrimgeour 01206 574797

# It Starts with a Shoebox...

Leaflets and Boxes for **Operation Christmas Child** are now available in Church or by phoning us.

Please follow the instructions carefully; noting which items should NOT be included. The donation towards processing and transport this year is £5.00 to be put in the box or paid online. Secure the box lid with a rubber band.

The last date for delivery of filled boxes is **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November**.

Thank you

**Tom and Kathleen Scrimgeour – 574797**



## Christmas Bazaar 2018

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December**

The Christmas Bazaar will be held on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December from 10.30am. Further details are on p35

If you can offer help on a stall, please contact  
**Tom and Kathleen Scrimgeour on 574797**



# LEXDEN WAR MEMORIAL CROSS

## First World War Deaths October and December 1918



There are only three names recorded on the War Memorial for the closing months of 1918, two who died in France in October and one death near Constantinople in December.

The two men who died in October 1918 lie buried in Commonwealth War Grave Commission Cemeteries within 15 kms of each other to the south and east of Cambrai, both killed as the Allied armies pursued the final advance of the war starting on 8<sup>th</sup> October which by the end of the month had driven the Germans back to the Franco-Belgian frontier and then further into Belgium by the Armistice on 11<sup>th</sup> November.

Private Alfred Hugh Baines of the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) died on the opening day of this advance, 8<sup>th</sup> October 1918, aged 26, and is buried in Bois-des-Angles British Cemetery, Crevecouer-sur-L'Escaut 16 kms due south of Cambrai. This village had been captured on 1<sup>st</sup> October by the New Zealand and 3<sup>rd</sup> Divisions. His father, also named Alfred, lived at 12 Straight Road, Lexden.

On 21<sup>st</sup> October Gunner Cecil George Keeping of The Royal Garrison Artillery was killed, aged 38, and he is buried in Quievy Communal Cemetery Extension, 15 kms east of Cambrai, a cemetery originally established by the Germans and expanded by the 62<sup>nd</sup> (West Riding) British Division after they occupied the area. Cecil was the husband of Emily Mary Keeping and they lived close to the Church at 31 Lexden Street.

The final war death of 1918 was also the only sailor listed amongst the First World War names on the Memorial.

*(Continued on p37...)*

*(...continued from p35)*

Lt. Ernest Laurence Ruck-Keene RN is recorded as having drowned near Constantinople on Christmas Eve, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December 1918. He is recorded as serving on HMS Egmont which appears to have been a shore establishment in Valetta Grand Harbour, Malta which ties in with his also being mentioned as serving on the staff of the Commander in Chief, Mediterranean Fleet. Turkey had signed an earlier Armistice on 31<sup>st</sup> October aboard a British battleship anchored off Mytilene and my surmise is that Lt. Ruck-Keene had been sent with the occupation forces to Constantinople where he somehow met with a drowning accident, aged 26. Ernest was the son of Jessie Ruck-Keene, and her late husband George, of Church House, Lexden.

Finally, following the article in the August issue, Alice Goss kindly undertook some further research into Lance-Corporal Arthur George Jarrett who was killed in Baku, on the Caspian Sea on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1918. Thanks to her investigations we now know that Arthur attested for army service in December 1915 but was not mobilised until August 1916 at Warley. At his attestation he gave his age as 31 and his address as 90 North Station Road, Colchester with his occupation as newsagent and tobacconist, but before he was called up he married Frances Rose Merchant on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1916 and they set up home at 57 London Road, Lexden a terraced house just to the east of the present *ICUT* hairdressers.

After training in the UK Arthur was promoted to Lance Corporal and posted to The North Staffordshire Regiment embarking on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1917 at Southampton for a two-month voyage to Bombay. His time in India was quite short as in August 1917 his battalion took ship again for Basra, in present day Iraq, leading to his deployment north to the Caspian and his death, aged 34, the following Summer. He is remembered on his parents' gravestone in Colchester Cemetery.

There remain two further WW1 names on the memorial, both of whom died in February 1919 and I shall deal with those two soldiers in another article early next year.

**Tom Scrimgeour**

# Book Review



## ***Plain Truth* by Jodi Picoult**

‘In your world, people can reach each other in an instant. There’s the telephone and the fax – and on the computer you can talk to someone all the way round the world.... All those connections, but everyone there seems so lonely.’ This is Katie’s impression of a world far from Pennsylvania’s Amish community where she lives with her family. The novel is set in the ‘90s but these words ring no less true today than they did 20 years ago. Katie is talking about a world where her brother, Jacob, now lives. Excommunicated by his church and disowned by his father, Jacob left the Amish community in order to study. Katie’s visits to her brother would not have been countenanced by her father but are the only means by which her mother can maintain contact with her son. Katie is allegedly visiting her mother’s sister, Leda, who married outside the community and consequently is banned from certain social contact with the community. She could talk to Amish friends and family, for example, but could not eat with them.

How Katie becomes pregnant, the circumstances of the baby’s birth, the subsequent discovery of the dead infant and Katie’s trial for murder form the basis of an extraordinary and compelling story. Jodi Picoult’s portrayal of the Amish Community is as sympathetic as her portrayal of her two main characters: the young Amish woman, terrified at the consequences of becoming pregnant out of wedlock; and Ellie, the tough defence lawyer, so confident in court; less so in her personal life. Leda is also Ellie’s aunt by marriage. Ellie had spent many summers, as a child, on her late uncle’s farm in Paradise, Pennsylvania and her visit now is for rest and recuperation. She came into regular contact with the Plain people - the Old Order Amish - distinguished by their horse-drawn buggies, their old fashioned clothing, and their refusal of both electricity and telephone in the house. But the world outside the community had necessitated compromises both with technology and, as the book reveals, with the American system of justice.

When it becomes clear that Katie needs a defence lawyer Ellie reluctantly obliges. The application for bail is granted on condition Katie does not

leave the township, that she lives at her parents' home and must be under the supervision of a family member at all times. The father is not present in court. Her mother refuses to agree to the bail conditions and Leda's offer of help is declined. Ellie, as Katie's cousin and attorney, is left with little choice but to offer to do this and to go and live on the Fishers' farm. This is a transformative experience for the lawyer who learns the value of living in a community and 'how it had felt to part of something bigger than myself'.

I visited the Amish community at the exact same period in which this book is set and immediately felt like an intruder amongst tourists whose behaviour in many cases left a lot to be desired. I was seeing the Amish from the outside. In telling this story Jodi Picoult offers a chance to see this community from within: the mutual support; the emphasis on forgiveness; a system of justice unique to the community. To give Katie the last word: 'The English [the word used to describe those outside the community] judged a person so they'd be justified in casting her out. The Amish judged a person so they'd be justified in welcoming her back.'

**Robin Greatorex**