

# Silent Visitor



*(Trinity Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June)*

# June 2020

## Aaaargh!

When will this end? I've had enough of this. I want to be able to talk to someone without having to guess how far 2 metres is, or worry about what observers are thinking. I want to go and visit my family. Go away for a few days. Have a meal in a restaurant. Not have to queue to get into a supermarket. Just do a million and one things I'd taken for granted. Aaaargh!

But, I can't. I shouldn't. And being inconvenienced now is a lot better than risking my own, my family's and other people's health because I'm fed up with being kept mainly between these four walls. It is also inappropriate as there are many who wish they were in my position. Within our society there are many struggling to keep afloat or wearing themselves out caring for others. And when we look to other places in the world that were fragile even before this, it truly highlights the privileged position many of us find ourselves in.

But knowing that doesn't stop me being fed up. And whatever feelings we have, bottling them up doesn't help. Our families might not appreciate our letting loose, as they have their own challenges, but God is willing and able to listen to what is on our hearts.

Too often we only think we can bring before God what we are thankful for, and our concerns for others. And too often what we do bring is a shopping list of desires and wants. But you only have to look to the Psalms to hear anguished cries to God, and we have Paul's words to the church in Rome.

*Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

*Romans 8:26 – 27 (NRSV)*

So as we continue to stay home and stay safe, let us remember that God is still there. This isn't great, but it could be much worse. And that however we are feeling, God is there beside, around and beyond us. God is already listening, knows how you are feeling, and the Spirit is willing to stir, move and embrace you.

**With every blessing,** Rev'd David R Coaker

## Financial Update

I have now paid the invoice from Peter Dey for the repair works on the Annexe toilets. This reduced the bank balance by £4,000, but it was essential to get the works completed before hirers start to use the Annexe again.

Charlotte now tells me of a major heating pipe leak in the Church, which will require some of the floor to be lifted in the church hall and replacement pipework and new radiators to be installed in the Church. The repair work will run into thousands of pounds. Watch this space.

Year end accounts have been prepared and un-audited copies available. Brookes Accountants have made good progress in computerising the accounts and have submitted our 2019 claim for the gift aid repayment from the HMRC.

At the moment the only money going into the bank account is from those folk who have chosen to pay their weekly offering by standing order. I am pleased to say that quite a few of you have chosen to pay this way. May I again thank those people and urge those who have yet to set up a standing order, or donate by bank transfer, to give it consideration. I know that at the moment it may be difficult but I do feel this will become the way of regular church giving in the future. If you do need any help please let me know.

This brings me to cheques. Several folk have sent me cheques for their backdated weekly offerings, thank you. However, the church bank account is with HSBC Bank, situated in the Lakeside Shopping Centre which is currently very difficult to access. This causes a problem when trying to pay in cheques, with the result that none of these cheques have yet been banked. However, if other folk wish to pay by cheque for their missed weekly offerings please send me a cheque for the missed weeks together with their collection envelopes. I will then gather all the cheques together and pay them in.

Needless to say, our normal regular outgoings continue to be paid each month, which continually reduces our bank balance.

I have investigated the withdrawal of funds from our investments, and it is only a matter of time, I feel, before we will indeed have to take this step.

Lastly, I enclose a small part of a document produced by the URC Synod Moderators regarding the 'New Normal' within church life post Covid-19. It gives some guidance of the changes that will have to be made going forward. I found it interesting.

*"Taking the offering passing the plate along rows must not be your practice for the foreseeable future. Encourage bank standing orders/transfers. Consider a basket at the back of church for people to leave their gifts as they enter (but be mindful of security). Consider investing in a contactless machine for giving by card. Anyone handling cash should wear gloves for counting and banking. Remember to include those gifts offered through bank transfers in the prayer of dedication."*

I trust and pray that all are keeping well.

*Alan Beckley*

## **Some Good News**

Bob and Margaret Datlen would like to share the happy news of their new Grandson, born on 11<sup>th</sup> May in Lewisham Hospital. Both mother and baby, Wilson James Datlen, are well and happy and so are Granddad and Grandma.



Heavenly Father, we rejoice that we can share in the joy and happiness of the Datlen family on the birth of Wilson. We pray that despite the current restrictions, their joy is not impaired and they may all spend time together soon.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen

## From Ben Marshall

***“I don’t like standing near the edge of a platform when an express train is passing through. I like to stand back and, if possible, get a pillar between me and the train. I don’t like to stand by the side of a ship and look down into the water. A second’s action would end everything. A few drops of desperation.”***

Few people may recognise that quote. It is Sir Winston Churchill describing what he would call his "black dog". Churchill, like so many in this world, had a pet black dog. Not the fluffy kind who fetches a stick or ball in the park but the kind that haunts you on a daily basis and reaches deep into your soul and preys on your weaknesses. This is the Black Dog we call depression.

So why have I started my piece for the Silent Visitor like this? I have a pet black dog that has been haunting me for the last 12 years. I, like so many people, have depression. That is not an easy thing to admit to people and for the past 12 years I have tried to mask it and have been putting on an act as I travel through life. In reality though I’m not happy 100% of the time as some people would believe to look at me, and it took a life event in December for me to realise this, and make me finally realise that I might need help.

I was struggling in my new job, which resulted in my becoming very ill with high blood pressure, and close to being on medication for the rest of my life. Our first Christmas as a married couple was a tough one as I tried to relax but my mind kept running through everything that I had perceived to have done wrong at work and the upset I had caused – even though I understood that there is a lot to learn at a new job and that it was always going to be a challenge. This struggle made me become a recluse in some respects, and I started not to attend meetings, not leave the house for Church or Scouting events as I just couldn’t face the world whilst feeling like a let-down and that I had disgraced myself to those who loved me. I just needed to escape. Things had become so bad I was struggling even to get out of bed in the morning. I didn’t know why I felt this way and on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 I called a Mental Health charity based in Thurrock. That call was the catalyst to start to change my life, and the following day they called me back.

How do you tell a complete stranger that you feel like you are going mad? On the 2<sup>nd</sup> January, sitting on my bed looking out of the window, that’s exactly what I did. I spoke for an hour, just letting out all the fears I

had of letting people down, the fear of doing something wrong which would affect others, the nervousness I had started to feel whilst driving or even picking up the phone to speak to a person I knew. These fears may sound silly to some but to me these little obstacles had started to become big issues that were affecting my day to day life.

Days later, after resigning from the job that I was so worried about, I then received a diagnosis that would change my way of thinking for ever. I was diagnosed with Stage 3 Depression, Anxiety and also OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder). Most people think of OCD as the excessive washing of hands and being very tidy. As people who know me will tell you I am not a tidy person, my wardrobe is the floor and I had no problem going out on a cross country run and returning covered in mud, so I thought to myself, how could I have OCD?

OCD is horrific – this was the first thing that my therapist said to me during our first session. It targets your weaknesses and every negative thought you have ever had about yourself and imposes a crippling fear that these will be exposed to the world. These thoughts and feelings can then cause depression and anxiety – a downward spiral which is very hard to get out of.

I constantly reflect and analyse everything that I do and try to find a weakness. I worry about pleasing others, I battle with myself to try to get things right and making sure I am the best possible person I could be. To some people this might sound familiar, but when these thoughts are in your head going round at 1000 miles per hour and impacts on your daily life and makes you feel so horribly low, then this is something that needs to be addressed.

Let me give you an example of something that has happened recently to me to try and highlight this. I was driving back from the doctor's surgery in Orsett. This is a journey I have done hundreds of times and know where I am going, the speed limits and the difficult areas on the drive. I was on my own, driving down a road and I hit a bump in the road. I continued to drive home and got to the end of my road and then my mind took over. It was telling me that it wasn't a pot hole in the road that had bumped the car it was something else - an animal or worse, a cyclist. I drove past my house and completed the route again to make sure that this was just a pot hole and I had not done anything more serious. I had to make sure that I checked this, otherwise in my head I would have had visions of my being taken away in handcuffs by the police, being convicted of committing a crime and then losing everything I value in life. This is common OCD type behaviour called catastrophising. The thoughts I had and could not get rid of, were very

extreme, and all I could think of was the worst case scenario in a situation where nothing had even happened.

This behaviour has led to some very horrible places in my mind, and which makes me question a lot of things. I wondered why me, what had I done to deserve this? I've come to terms that this is a medical illness – my brain just doesn't work or isn't wired in the same way as most other people. But even so, as some people maybe have done in desperate times, I questioned my faith, as I have been nothing but a good person in my life so why was this happening? People say the lord works in mysterious ways.

I was scrolling through Youtube trying to take my mind off my thoughts and feelings and I found a video about Sir Winston Churchill. A hero of mine, a fantastic speaker and a person who I greatly admire for his spirit and determination. To my surprise, this video talked about Churchill and his depression. I watched on and he talked about how he would release his depression by freeing his black dog. Churchill was a painter and this was his way of releasing the black dog and therefore remove the thoughts he had in his head - he also took up bricklaying to do this too! As you walk around Chartwell (Churchill's Home) you can see some of the walls which he laid when trying to free the black dog.

This got me thinking of what I could do to try and 'free the black dog', and find my faith again myself, as currently the path I was going down was a bleak one. I racked my brains and tried to think of something that could help me to find beauty again in life. I had done photography for many years, as an amateur, and I never published any of my work for fear of being told it was not good enough. Close friends had seen some of the images I had taken and asked me to take photos of their weddings etc. but I still didn't think I was any good.



There was one evening where I felt compelled to go out and take my camera. I don't know why and I will be forever glad I did, but as I walked down Bradleigh Avenue I turned in to the church grounds.

I went and sat on the grass at the church and just looked up. It was late and sunset was drawing in. All of a sudden, a beautiful sunset appeared behind the clouds. I started snapping photos and started to feel that the negative thoughts I was having were evaporating.

I got home, had a look, and to my surprise they looked quite good. Laura looked over them and said you should publish these. That night I published the photos to a photography site. To my surprise people all over the world have got in touch with me to express how good these photos are.

If I had not been drawn to the church at that point with my camera, I feel that this avenue would not have been opened to me and that I would not have found a way to see the beauty of this world again. In doing this I feel I have been able to move forward and along with undergoing specialist therapy, I am taking small steps to return slowly to the person I was before.

Lockdown has not helped me in many ways but in others it has given me time and space and in some ways a determination to make myself better from this illness. The Lord definitely works in mysterious ways.

When this lockdown is all over and when we return to some sort of normality, please feel free to ask me how I am, as people would ask me how I was if I had broken my arm or leg. This is an illness and please don't feel that you have to skirt around this issue or treat me any different. Be honest with me as that helps. I am more than happy to talk about it with anyone who asks me.

For anyone that is interested in looking at my photos please feel free to browse at [www.flickr.com/photos/bmlphotos](http://www.flickr.com/photos/bmlphotos) . You do not have to register to look at them and you will all be able to recognise the photos I have taken of the beautiful church and grounds.

I will end as I started, with a quote from Churchill. In a letter to his wife in 1911, he wrote about a doctor he had seen and discussed his feelings with. In having my own doctor and therapist I understand the help and sanctuary he felt when talking to others.

***I think this man might be useful to me – if my black dog returns. He seems quite away from me now – it is such a relief. All the colours come back into the picture.***

God bless you all and please stay safe in these unusual times.

*Ben Marshall*



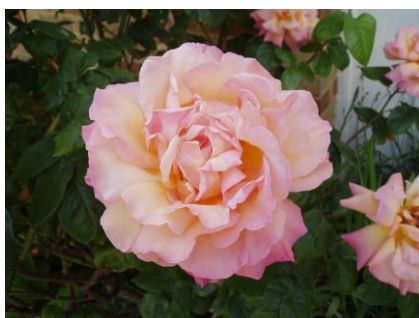
## Growing seeds

I have been fortunate to enjoy some glorious cycle rides. This has led me to reflect on how a cycle journey relates to a spiritual journey throughout a lifetime. Peaks to plod up, troughs to plod along and occasional times of flying along. Joy of the wind at your back, a little downhill path causing a sense of freedom not to mention a little danger, makes the uphill pain and slow slog along all worthwhile and forgotten in a moment. In front of me I usually catch sight of Alan's 'high vis' jacket, before he disappears at a junction but I know he will wait at a strategical point on our route to ensure I am OK.

I can relate all the above to my personal relationship with God and our church life, as God leads us through pain, a steady plod and occasional highs. We occasionally catch a glimpse as the Holy Spirit guides us in the right direction and we can be sure in the knowledge our Heavenly Father is beside or in front all the way.

I am sure being in lockdown has caused us all to reflect on our personal spiritual journey and the journey of Grays URC. It will be good to share when we are once again able to worship within the building.

Many who have been caused to reflect on the spiritual matters during this difficult time may be searching. Some have found this strange time exhausting and will be searching for respite. As lock down relaxes and the business of life begins to take over, the parable of the sower may be brought to mind. I would trust that those who may turn to Grays URC will find a rich and fertile soil in which to land and grow.



A place to pause and step forward.

A glimpse of our Heavenly Father's all encompassing love.

I believe this fertile soil which may be sought includes many diverse ways to engage with 'church'. As a church we can find and develop relationships with the wider community. Within these relationships we trust the love of God will be present.

Our wonderful complex lends itself to many community activities within which the love of God, a fragrance of Jesus, may flourish. To be part of a growing and caring community project I believe is to worship. Within Grays URC let us find ways of caring and showing how much God is love to everybody.

Cooking, gardening, exercise, drama, song, craft, simply friendship, holidays at home, language tuition, are all facets of building relationships within which the Church can evolve and grow.

Please give thought, reflection, prayer to the forward journey of Grays URC. I trust Grays URC will fly. The wind of the Holy Spirit at our backs, Jesus at our sides and our Heavenly Father leading the way.

*Denise Beckley*



## **Family News**

It was good news to hear that after spending ten days in hospital, Doreen Thomas was being discharged home.

We all wish Doreen well and feel sure she is pleased to be back home in her familiar surroundings.

*Lord Jesus, we pray for all those who are frail or feeling unwell and we ask for your healing hands to comfort and strengthen them. Lord Jesus, it is a difficult time for all of us and we thank you for being there and listening to us when we pray.*

*Amen*

## Two Poems

Inger and Alan's granddaughter, Linnea Collier, shared with them a couple of poems that she has written for a school magazine. Linnea is happy for Inger and Alan to share them with us in our magazine. Here are the poems Linnea wrote in Year 9 and Year 10 of her school:-

### "We need to Change with the times"

Is this world so awful?  
Is everyone so dreadful?  
No,  
For most people are good at heart,  
But for some reason,  
The self loving float to the top  
The greedy, rather than the generous  
Short-term thinkers, rather than long-term.  
Why?  
In the depths of prehistory,  
They were reasonably acceptable leaders for the nomads  
For protection and hunting,  
And similar  
As a house of sticks would be quicker to build  
Then a house of stone  
When you are travelling eternally.  
Now  
We have enough food to feed the world  
The knowledge to stop global warming  
The technology to restart a heartbeat.  
And yet,  
We have greedy leaders with short-term plans.  
We don't need to fight a sabre-toothed tiger  
Or hunt to prevent starvation  
Yet we keep a social structure  
That elevates the greedy power  
And celebrates a short-term plan.  
We now build houses out of stone  
But we still build plans from sticks  
That blow over in the first wind.

*by Linnea Collier, Year 9*

## "The Fairest Option"

You can't fit a square peg in a round hole,  
Which doesn't stop the round pegs from trying,  
Shoving, hammering, "It has to fit" they cry,  
The square pegs will shove themselves in, appeal for help,  
If the shame doesn't stop them first. "Why?" you ask,  
They are hurt, they are pained, why don't they complain?  
Well, the weird and the strange are things to be ashamed  
They are mental, insane, lunatic, disordered.  
But the hammers and mallets smash them to fit,  
Splintered into sawdust, or merely cracked in two.

Eventually, someone realises not all pegs are the same shape  
However, they see this as a problem, not a solution  
An illness, a deformity, needing to be fixed:  
No more smashed squares: They cut off corners instead.  
Normality is a goal. Freakishness is the enemy.

Extraordinary means extra-ordinary.  
But squares are meeting other squares  
(It's easier now they know of their existence)  
They talk about their pain. They begin to complain.  
They ask why should we change?  
They say, unique equals different equals strange  
They say it's the holes, not they, we should change.

But work is needed to change the holes  
Effort of many to break the stone  
Surely it's better for one to labour than many?  
But surely a million miniscule pains is better than an agonising one?  
Oh, I don't know. Actually ...

The fairest option is a compromise  
An equal effort on both sides  
Well, I swear I'll round my corners  
So long as you square the hole.

*by Linnea Collier, Year 10*

## Do I have to?

As a child, my youngest sister was always saying 'Do I have to?', and when Janet asked me to write an article for the Silent Visitor, my thoughts turned to my sister's words – do I have to? Now, having been a member of the church for over 30 years and never submitted an article for publication I suppose I must do it. So how does one start and what do you write about?

Having been virtually locked in for nearly 2 months and not being able to travel, my thoughts have been returning to some of the places we have visited over the past few years. One of, if not my most, favourite places, is the small island of Gozo, situated a few miles off the coast of Malta. We have been there twice now and had planned to return again this coming September. This now is unlikely as I am sure the travel restrictions will not be lifted in time.



As tourists we like to visit many places whilst relaxing, often wandering off the beaten tracks and the main streets to find a quiet cafe or restaurant frequented mainly by locals. Gozo is a mainly Catholic island and has many elaborate churches with outstanding decorations and

icons. The people of Gozo are quite devout and passionate about their churches and their Saints. The summer months are handed over to fiesta time and every town and village will have a very exuberant and passionate fiesta. The statue of the patron saint of the local church is removed and paraded around for the crowds to see and to follow. While talking to one of the locals in a church, we were invited to join them for the evening for the start of their fiesta week. We arrived back at the church in the evening, 10 minutes before the service was due to start. The church was virtually full with people of every age and in every conceivable type of clothing, from the finest Sunday best down to the shorts and tee shirts. Young and old alike were singing and dancing and clapping, building up to the moment when John the Baptist was to be brought out. The service was conducted in Maltese but that didn't matter; it was so exciting. We followed the crowd out of the church and around the village, the atmosphere was electric and my thoughts turned to Jesus and his journey into Jerusalem. What an exciting time that must have been. Talking to the priest earlier in the day he told us that he was to have 7 services on a Sunday because there are about 4,000

people who wish to worship and the church is just not big enough. With John the Baptist safely back in the Church it was time to continue outside with fireworks and more singing and dancing.



John the Baptist in the Rotunda, Gozo

We can't wait to go back and share in their wonderful hospitality and learn more about their culture.

*David and Frances Lock*

Whilst we were not intending to go abroad this summer, like David and Frances we had some holidays planned. The first should have been just after Easter with another following on in June - but due to the corona virus and lockdown our plans were "scuppered".



We are still hopeful that sometime this year we may get away in our touring caravan and relax in some late summer / autumn sunshine!

In the mean time we still enjoy a walk around Blackshots field and tidying up the garden!

*Janet Semain*

## Message from Pat Boag

I hope all our friends within the church are keeping well and coping with the odd times we are living in.

Bill and I are managing and it has made a great difference to us being able to keep in touch with some of you, and remembering all.

At the start of the lockdown we started on the minefield of arranging supermarket slots. For some reason I had been left off the first list of people needing help. Lots of laptop time and phone calls finally sorted that out and fortunately slots are now available.

Next comes the substitutions – the funniest one was two bags of bread flour became two tins of custard! Not appreciated by the bread making machine.

Technology has come into its own. A friend rang for a chat and said he had learnt how to video chat and he then told me how to do it. It worked much to my amazement. Then I taught our daughters and grandchildren too – I was told I was a cool Nan! It has made it much easier being able to see each other. The children seem to have grown loads.

We have been shown the tortoises as they came out of hibernation, the koi carp in the pond and the cats in the household.

In another we saw the new paddling pool, the cats and the tadpoles in a tank until they changed into tiny frogs.

In Scotland we saw the chill turn to Spring with the daffodils arriving and heard last week that the wren is nesting near to their back door and the new vegetable plot is being started.

I had a treat when I contacted our niece first in Chamonix when we were able to see Mont Blanc with its range of mountains topped with snow and then this week by Lake Como, one of my favourite places. She has promised to take me on a virtual walk along the lake when she has finished her fourteen day isolation due to the move of country.

Bill doesn't cope with technology but was pleased when I could look up parts for his old lorry and the old motorbike he is restoring. He coped a lot better once he could get on it! OK so far so here's hoping.

I have spent time baking, knitting, sewing and gardening. I, like many people have had a problem getting flour. Our daughter came to the rescue with a parcel from her local bakery – this contained bread flour and yeast plus self raising and plain flours. She knows I make cakes

and Bill enjoys eating them and the bread machine has come into its own.

Another plus found in the freezer was Inger's apple cake which I won. It was a real treat – thanks Inger.

Our Close arranged a social distancing VE day street party. It went very well. Music to suit most people had been arranged, a lad who was learning the guitar played the National Anthem. We had all taken out eats and drinks and it was a lovely afternoon and a great lift to the locked in feeling.

I wonder and hope the virus has given us all the time to think of others and be grateful for what we have and have concern for those in difficult circumstances.

We send our love to you all and hopefully we shall be able to meet up again soon.

*Pat Boag*

## **Virtual Coffee Morning**

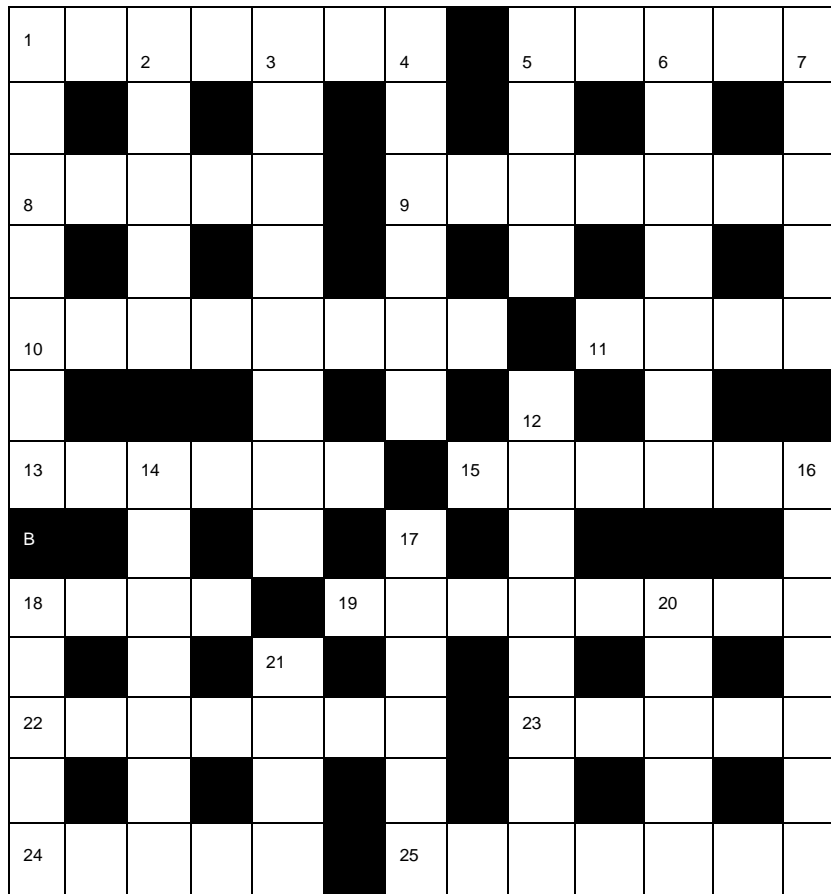
Don't forget Rev'd Dave has invited us to a "virtual" coffee morning on Wednesdays at 10.30am via the Zoom connection.

Dave has sent out the necessary details by email to anyone in the Church who would like to log-in. It was trialled on the 20<sup>th</sup> May and seven or so of us were able to get together and have a brief chat. The session only lasts for about 30 minutes – but don't forget to bring your drink with you!!





## A Crossword you may like to try!



### Clues Across:

1. Hadad (in 1 Kings 11) was one
5. In which God called to Jacob (Genesis 31.11)
8. A problem for the Israelites during the Exodus
9. Is this what Jesus was talking about in Matthew 6:28?
10. The three wise men were something of this sort
11. "... .. easier" (Matthew 19) (2,2)
13. She was clearly worth waiting for (Genesis 29)
15. People who are this will be blessed (Luke 6) (4,2,)
18. All the people of the land did this (2 Kings 11)
19. Peter and Andrew did this many times (3,2,3,)
22. This one was called John
23. This son of Raamah was no queen (1 Chronicles 1)
24. We could say Goliath became one
25. Collection of Jewish oral laws

### Clues Down:

1. Moses was angry with him (Leviticus 10)
2. The Levites abandoned all that they ..... (2 Chronicles 11)
3. False prophets did this after genuine ones
4. Was this Baal's problem? (1 Kings 18:26)
5. The water didn't come out like this (Exodus 17.6)
6. It happened to Matthias in Acts 1
7. Jesus was impressed over two of them (Mark 12)
12. The disciples performed many of these on Jesus' orders
14. One of the two (Luke 24)
16. Moses had to get tough with him
17. Zachariah was chosen by lot according to what? (Luke 1)
18. Where the Lord confused their language
20. Where the sailors dropped their anchor from (Acts 27)
21. It's better to be poor than this (Proverbs 19)

*NB: The answers will be shown in the July Edition of the Silent Visitor.*

### 2 Ken Dodd Jokes!

Eve said to Adam "Do you love me?"  
Adam replied "Of course I do, who else is there?"

Mother, put the kettle on, it suits you.



Statue of Ken Dodd at Lime Street Station, Liverpool

*(You have to remember that it's the way he told them!)*

*This article may be one of those that is currently doing the "rounds". It was sent to me by Inger who had received it from Glenda, who had received it from someone else! As to where it originated that is unknown. It seems to be going global and therefore in the public domain which should mean there is no problem with it's being included in the Silent Visitor. 🙌 Ed*

## **A Good Perspective**

It's a mess out there now. Hard to discern between what's a real threat and what is just simple panic and hysteria. For a small amount of perspective at this moment, imagine you were born in 1900.

On your 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, World War I erupts and ends on your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. 22 million people perish in that war. Later in the year, a Spanish Flu epidemic hits the planet and runs until your 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. 50 million people die from it in those two years. Yes, 50 million.

On your 29<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Great Depression begins. Unemployment hits 25%, the World GDP drops 27%. That runs until you are 33. The country nearly collapses along with the world economy.

When you turn 39, World War II starts. You aren't even over the hill yet. And don't try to catch your breath. On your 41<sup>st</sup> birthday, the United States is fully pulled into WWII. Between your 39<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> birthday, 75 million people perish in the war.

Smallpox was epidemic until in you were in your 40's, as it killed 300 million people in your lifetime.

At 50, the Korean War starts, 5 million perish. From your birth until you were 55 you dealt with the fear of Polio epidemics each summer. You experienced friends and family contracting polio and being paralyzed and/or dying.

At 55 the Vietnam war begins and doesn't end for 20 years. 4 million people perish in that conflict. During the Cold War, you lived each day with the fear of nuclear annihilation. On your 62<sup>nd</sup> birthday you had the Cuban Missile Crisis, a tipping point in the Cold War. Life on our planet, as we know it, almost ended. When you turn 75, the Vietnam War finally ends.

If you were a kid in 1985 you didn't think your 85 year grandparents understood how hard school was. And how mean that kid in your class was. Yet they survived through everything listed above.

Perspective is an amazing art. Refined and enlightening as time goes on. Let's try and keep these things in perspective. Your parents and/or grandparents were called to endure all of the above – we are only called to stay home and sit on our couch.

Author unknown

## Technology – love it or hate it!



It's a bit like marmite I suppose. It doesn't come easy to me and I know we can't live without it and it's here to stay. I suppose it's an age thing or is that an excuse? When studying 'O' level English Language at Thurrock Technical College some years ago, I was asked to write an essay about shopping on-line. This was well before it was ever heard of – shopping for groceries and things without going to the shops. That would never catch on! How wrong I was and how much I and many others would need it in 2020.

Yes, I.T. is a natural entity in most homes now and we might feel lost without it.

Take our WIFI, for instance; back in March just as we were locking down because of the virus, our wifi kept cutting out. It was sorted out for us and the one thing that has helped to keep us in touch is being able to send and receive messages and to Face-time, etc. Also it has been helpful for many others being able to work from home and log-in to meetings all around the world!

So perhaps I am coming to love the advancements that have been, and are being, made to keep me and many others in touch with their friends, family and work!

Ed.