

September 2020

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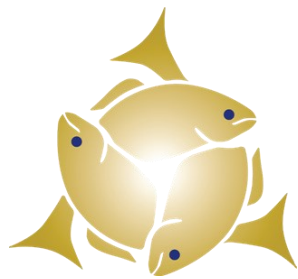


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This magazine sees the death of our dear friend, Geoffrey Lees. There are lots of tributes to him that tell of his love and kindness to all.

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Remember we love to receive articles and photographs for the magazine which can be sent to the e-mail address below. However, we reserve the right to edit anything that is sent to us and the editor's decision is final.

Please note that views expressed in Trinity Times are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Parochial Church Council.

The next magazine will be the **October 2020** edition

The copy date is 11 September

If any item is left until the very last minute, or received after the copy date, there is no guarantee that it will be able to be included in the magazine.

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Front cover :- Dove in stained glass ~ West End of church.

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SEPTEMBER ~ A MONTH OF HOPE



September has always seemed to me to be a special time, a month with fresh hope and new beginnings. That is probably because I spent sixteen years teaching at a Further Education College and the new academic year always started then. Years ago Roy and I would go out one evening to queue up at the College to get one of the prized places on an evening course, to learn a new skill like upholstery, woodwork, welding or perhaps brush up our French, Spanish or German for a summer holiday abroad.

In the daytime, many young people came to the College where I taught, because they did not have high enough grades to get straight into the job they wanted or to be offered a place at University. It was our privilege to help them see that they did already have talents and abilities, that were transferable from some of their hobbies and interests. It just needed a little more time, effort and nurturing to develop these to the point where they could become useful job skills to move on to paid employment.

In the evening I often lectured for the Open University, preparing service men and women, or those who worked in manufacturing industries, to learn the newer IT and Computing skills that they would need when their current work ceased.

Sadly there will be many people today whose new businesses did not grow as they had hoped because of the lockdown, or who find the job that they had loved for many years, despite the efforts of the furlough scheme, has now ceased to exist. It would be good if we as a society, could find new ways of supporting those in this position. If there is anything we can learn from the Covid-19 pandemic, it is that God whose image we are made in, is still at work giving us the creative ideas and skills we need, to find new ways of living with the virus, if not completely overcoming it and of encouraging and supporting one another.

Fortunately, as a church we moved quickly to find new ways of meeting, perhaps by telephone or online instead of face to face. Across the town and villages, groups from various backgrounds were set up to take food parcels to those confined to their homes. The Foodbank went into overdrive to support those in desperate need and the scheme to provide meals during the school holidays to poorer families finally got off the ground.

Many of us now find our spiritual sustenance by joining streamed services or home groups online or back in church at the 4pm service. If our faith means anything to us, it is that we take the love, joy and peace we receive in these services out into the community to help us serve others in whatever way we can.

At Queen's College where I trained for the ministry, we had a sentence over the door of the chapel, not as we entered, but as we left, that said "You are now entering a place of worship". If we are able to venture out, perhaps we can take the gifts we receive in our worship of God out into the local community, into shops, supermarkets, tourist venues and perhaps even the theatre one day, to really give hope to those around us who would dearly love some encouragement to keep going whether in work or looking for new work.

Kay Dyer

Associate Priest



Worship Notes

The developing shape of our worship in the parish is being given careful consideration as we begin to see (at the time of writing at least) a relaxation of the restrictions that have had such an enormous impact on our lives together as a parish.



Our intention during September is to continue the Sunday pattern at Holy Trinity of:

10am Broadcast Parish Service (either pre-recorded or live streamed)

4pm Holy Communion (open to all but booking required in advance)

We had a trial of some new equipment for live streaming in August. This was partially successful, for example enabling us to add subtitles whilst live and to slot in pre-recorded videos in a way we had not been able to do before. However, there were some technical issues as well which affected the quality of the broadcast. So we have gone back to the supplier and are working with them to make sure that what we finally purchase (with a gift from parishioners) enables us to provide the quality of output we are seeking.

A congregation again at 10am

At the time of writing we are exploring the possibility of the 10am service being with a live congregation as well as live streamed. Further information about this will be published in the weekly email bulletins once it is known. We will also contact those known to us who are not online to inform them of any new developments (as we have done with the 4pm service).

Village Services

I'm delighted that worship is now resuming in our village churches, and we intend to have a 9.30am service of Holy Communion according to the following pattern:

St. Helen's, Clifford Chambers

1st and 3rd Sunday of the month

All Saints', Luddington.

2nd and 4th Sunday of the month

27 September will be Harvest Festival.

I'd like to express my thanks to all those who are working very hard to organise and lead our worship, whether online or in person. It's been a huge team effort and I very much hope that as we move forward into this uncharted territory, the team work that has got us through so far will be even more of a feature of the worship we offer together as the people of God in this parish, seeking to be more fully the Body of Christ.

FROM THE REGISTERS July/August

Christenings

9 August Genevieve O'Brien-Millard

Weddings

7 August James Gray and Catherine Walton

15 August Christopher Luby and Cara Finn

Funerals

22 July

Rosemary Fraser

29 July

David McDonnell

7 August

Elaine Carol Lummis

11 August

Ivy Radbourne

13 August

Thomas Gordon Ford (Tom)

18 August

Dr Geoffrey Lees

19 August

Luise Wilhelmine Kesterton

Geoffrey Lees RIP

Geoffrey was perhaps the most determined member of a church congregation I have ever met. Nothing would stop him from being at the Parish Eucharist each week. He faithfully transported Doreen to church, not allowing her limited mobility in the latter months of her life to stop them. He also regularly brought others who lived close by to church. Once at the service he wanted to participate, always sitting in the front row (see picture) and coming forward, latterly pushing Doreen, to receive Holy Communion, even when the offer of bringing it to them was made. The most striking example of his commitment to get to a service came when he had a fall on his way to attend the funeral of Andrea Blood last year. An ambulance was called to attend to him but, once given the all clear, he insisted to the paramedics that they drop him off at Holy Trinity so that he wouldn't miss the funeral!

It wasn't just services when you could always rely on Geoffrey being present. He and Doreen attended Soundbites every week, again giving lifts to others.

He made a great contribution to the parish with many years of organising the subscriptions and distribution of this magazine, Trinity Times. His accounting and delivery system was worthy of an engineering project and worked like a well-oiled machine, requiring several people to pick up the task once he could be persuaded the time had come to pass it on.

He was completely devoted to Doreen, and following her death wanted to make a gift to the church as a memorial to her. He was delighted with the suggestion that a project to replace the dated cloth panels in the screen across the North Transept with an etched glass design could be done in her memory. Work is still ongoing with the screen but it will now of course be appropriate for the screen to be a memorial to both Doreen and Geoffrey. I look forward to a suitable occasion in the future when we will be able to dedicate it and offer to God our thanksgivings for Geoffrey who, amongst his many professional and civic accomplishments, was a faithful disciple of Jesus, a fine example of what it means to love family and neighbour and generously served his community.

Patrick



Geoffrey in his accustomed front pew at the Easter Day service in 2018, sitting with his son Adrian and daughter in-law Anne-Marie. This is a taken from the video "What does Holy Trinity mean to you?" which can be viewed on the home page of the parish web site.

Photograph from video by Ben Atkinson.

TO EDIT OR NOT TO EDIT

Regular readers of Trinity Times may recall one of my articles from the beginning of Lockdown showing my new working arrangements with two laptops on the go. Two weeks ago, they multiplied and I had three laptops working and, as I pointed out to my friends, any more and I'll need a bigger table. The use of a third laptop had already forced me to clear some space in my lounge to unfold the other side of my folding table!! As I write this I am thankfully down to two again, the other is currently processing and finalising the edited version of Sunday's service.



It's always a worrying time when it's finalising the Video. There's always the risk that the computer will suddenly decided to fail and I will have to start the process again, usually after already waiting a couple of hours for it to do its thing. Although, touch wood, (or the faux wood covering on my table) that nothing has been as bad as the Shakespeare Service for errors. I still have a slight twitch when I think of this year's Shakespeare service, which was edited and put online. Looking back, I think I was still trying to recover from the mass video editing for Easter, including all the videos for the Bishop's reflections, with the Shakespeare service coming a fortnight later I think there may have been some residual trauma from that!



The side nobody else saw of the Shakespeare service 2020 was after over four hours of processing, when it was at 95% complete the computer decided to fail at 2am in the morning. After some tweaking and following the cut and shut car approach, saving the service in parts and using another computer programme to stick them all together, the service was finished. The next issue was getting it online, uploading it to YouTube.

I'd known it would take a while to put the whole service onto YouTube, but it was the first time I had uploaded something that long. After about two and a half hours it was only 25% uploaded, and the "time remaining" was slowly increasing rather than the expected decrease. It may seem a minor thing now, but the point when I was balancing up whether to wait for another eight hours or cancel it and start again, felt just like being in a movie deciding to cut the red or the green wire on a bomb with ten seconds remaining. The added jeopardy was that if I cancelled it and the time it said remaining was accurate, if I then added on the time I'd already spent, there was no way that the service was going to be ready and online for the advertised 10am. The pressure increased by the fact that both the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and the Royal Shakespeare Company, whose Artistic Director was giving the sermon, had advertised where and when the service would be available.

It may have been my delirious state from lack of sleep (by that point I'd been awake for twenty-two hours, and not had much sleep the night before from other editing) but I'm sure in my mind I could hear an overly dramatic movie soundtrack as my hand moved closer to the cancel button. Finally, I took the risk and stopped the upload, no explosion yet, but there was still the worry of how long the second attempt at an upload would take. After resetting everything I began the second upload, and to my relief, was told it would be done in an hour and a half and to an even greater relief it did actually do it in that time and the service was safely onto YouTube. Then I only had to worry about uploading it to Facebook, which thankfully didn't give me the same issues, so the videos were all in place with twenty minutes to spare.

cont.....

To Edit or not To Edit cont....

Editing the services and videos isn't always a stressful affair. I had some fun putting together my video "How NOT to open a Church for private prayer", if you haven't seen the video it's my proposal for how you could open a Church for people to use for private prayer, whilst following Covid restrictions. However, as the title suggests, following the advice is not recommended. With suggestions such as, instead of using an infrared thermometer scanner, have a display of flowers that are highly fragranced, if people can't smell the flowers they won't be allowed in as one of the symptoms of Covid is a lack of smell. Sanitizing candles with a 100% proof alcohol based cleaning product is also not recommended, but does create a bit of a fireball. If you haven't seen the video you can view it on our YouTube channel, search for "YouTube Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon" or on our Facebook channel. If you have trouble finding it email me and I'll send you a link (phil@stratford-upon-avon.org). I am hoping to do a sequel, if I get time, of "How NOT to open a Church for public worship" including guidance on Christenings and weddings...!

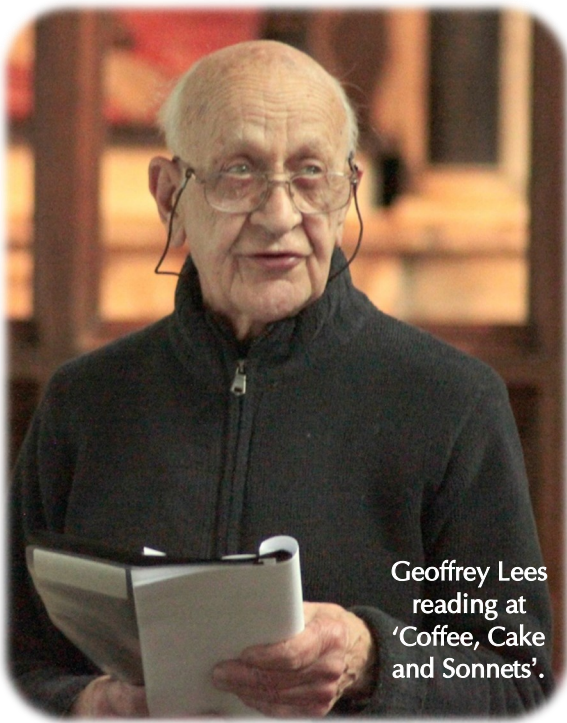


Phil Harper

*To mask or
not to mask?
That is the
question.*



Dr. Geoffrey Lees



Geoffrey Lees
reading at
'Coffee, Cake
and Sonnets'.

It was with great sadness that on Friday 31 July we heard of the passing of one of Stratford's best sons.

As the flag on the Town Hall was lowered to half mast the town mourned one of its noblest citizens. "Grief is the price we pay for love". Geoffrey was much loved. There was much grief. But it is a price worth paying for the joy of having known him, worked with him, laughed with him, debated with him and latterly watched him face death with the same humility, conviction and concern for others which he showed in life. He was fiercely independent and self sufficient and did not take kindly to outside help in his domestic life never wishing to be a burden on others. He will be remembered not only for the guts in facing up to failing health but for his extraordinary life force, his enthusiasm, his passion for politics, and belief in its power to

do good, his love of the Lib Dem party, his dedication to the cause and the team – they all have their place in the history of the party.

He managed to do amazing things without making enemies. That too was a product of his extraordinary personality, his love of people and his determination always to heal. His life was rooted in the foundational family values where the values that shaped his hidden and public life were instilled – honesty, respect for others, generosity of spirit, that mischievous sense of fun and to work/play hard.

Following his election as a Borough Councillor in 1966 he served the town in two Mayoralties the first of which was from 1978/79, the second from 1988/89. For over four decades he gave of his time and energy to the cultural and civic life of the town.

As a former Lecturer at Birmingham University in Highway Engineering he applied this expertise to the town of Stratford and was awarded the Design Council Award for the application of road surfacing materials to its roads.

As a former Chairman of the Stratford Society he was always in the forefront in promoting the town's civic life.

His engineering experience enabled him to contribute to controversial traffic issues finding himself as President of the Stratford upon Avon Road Safety Council and Deputy Traffic Commissioner for the West Midlands.

Dr Lees was involved with the Mayors' Fund for over twenty years as a Trustee, Secretary and organiser bringing much needed relief to the poor and needy in the town. Even in his 91st year he was on the rota as a volunteer at the Stratford Hospital Coffee Shop.

During his years on the Town and Borough Council he held positions as Governor of primary and secondary schools.

Amongst his many achievements and influence in the international sphere was his outreach in the setting up of the Stratfords of the World Organisation as Mayor. This is an organisation that brings together "Stratfords" with strong Shakespearean connections, and this organisation provides people across the world to develop mutual understanding and respect. He was held in high esteem by people from the six participating countries.

cont.....

Dr Geoffrey Lees cont.....

Although coming from a scientific background of geology and palaeontology Geoffrey became a committed churchman largely under the influence of the late Canon Peter Barnes who made the point to him that many scientists were happy to be believers in God. Concerned as to whether the Church would accept him for the views he held he was reassured that it was as an individual that he would be accepted and not for his views and that he was on a journey. On this basis Geoffrey came forward and presented himself for Confirmation. Geoffrey was regularly in attendance at church with his wife Doreen and for many years was an active member of the Trinity Players, the church drama group of which he was the founder member.



He was held in such high esteem by all former Mayors and Councillors of whatever political persuasion for his wisdom, integrity and encouragement.

For those of us who were privileged to be his friends and colleagues our relationship could be summed up in words that Mark Antony said of Julius Caesar "He was my friend, faithful and just to me".

Despite his distinguished academic career and high profile in Stratford Dr Lees was not a man who sought acclaim or recognition for his achievements so much as seeing his reward in serving humanity in his fellow human beings.

A more fitting tribute there cannot be than words spoken of Brutus by Mark Antony which if he had known Geoffrey, Shakespeare might have written for a devoted and dedicated public servant:

"His life was gentle,
And the elements so mixed in him
That all nature might stand up and say
To all the world
This was a man."

Rev Dr. Roy Lodge MBE
Former Mayor of Stratford upon Avon.



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BEYOND THE RIVER JORDAN - 1



Some twenty years ago, a decade before the Syrian war, my wife and I joined a Christian travel group to explore the lands of Jordan and Syria which provide such an important background for events in both the Old and the New Testaments. We aim in this new series to relate some of the highlights which gave us a fresh understanding of biblical stories, beginning with the river Jordan itself.



The Jordan Meander

In the Old Testament the Jordan River has a deep sense of foreboding and mystery about it, redeemed only by its association with the baptism of Jesus in the New. Geographically it marks the northern end of the Great Rift Valley which extends 4,000 miles from Syria to central Mozambique in East Africa, a long and deep injurious gash in the earth's surface, so vivid from space. At the end of its course the Jordan falls eerily to its salty death in the Dead Sea 1,400 ft below the level of all the world's oceans. In the Bible it is mentioned 190 times.

The river is associated with several sad partings and divisions. Here Abraham and Lot split west and east, and Hagar with her son Ishmael crossed over to plant a lasting grudge in Arab lands. Here Naomi and Ruth left Orpah inconsolable while they went on to Bethlehem, and David swelled the river with his tears for Absalom.

Here Elijah left Elisha to succeed him.

But it was also the place of miracles, the first being when the Jordan parted near Jericho to allow the Israelites to cross into the Promised Land. Here Elisha healed Naaman by having him bathe in the waters, and this is where he made an axe to float. But it shines most brightly in history as the place where Jesus was baptised and anointed by the Holy Spirit at the start of his mission to redeem the world. In spiritual songs it represents the final dividing line between earth and heaven.

The Jordan has always been the source of fertility, 'The well-watered garden of the Lord' (Gen 13.10). As we travelled along the east bank we could look down and see acres of glass shining in the sun, the source of abundant fruitfulness.

Small streams from the snowy heights of Mt Hermon form the Jordan River at a point where the Greek god Pan was said to be born and this is the region of Caesarea Philippi where Jesus announced to his uncomprehending disciples his resolve to head for his sacrificial death in Jerusalem.

From there the waters gather in the small Lake Hula before entering the Sea of Galilee. At the southern end of Galilee, the Jordan re-emerges and, after an amazing meandering winding and twisting course of 223 miles it falls steeply into the Dead Sea from which the only escape is evaporation. Today the river is under threat. Seven years of drought have diminished the flow, and the need of 600,000 Syrian refugees is not helping. Syria and Jordan each accuse the other of taking more than their fair share by damming the upper reaches. The Dead Sea is rapidly evaporating to its final death.

We arrived in modern Jordan at Amman airport. The centre feature of the city is the well preserved Roman amphitheatre, a reminder of Roman occupation in Jesus' day and of his and Paul's association with Roman governors and centurions. From Amman we were to explore the Decapolis, the region 'beyond Jordan' into which Jesus ventured as recorded in the early chapters of Matthew's gospel. So much unrealised to be discovered!



Baptism Site



Amman Amphitheatre

Church and Green Recovery for a better and sustainable future

by Lim and Evelyn Ho

After an unprecedented lockdown for half a year, we are now partially resuming our worship in our church buildings. Sadly the suffering of this pandemic is not over and it will take a long time for our recovery. What kind of 'new normal' should we aim for?

While we are threatened by Covid-19, a bigger climate crisis is deepening. The melting of the ice sheet in Antarctica is speeding up; wildfires have been spreading out in California, Australia, the Amazon and Arctic regions; the emission of methane from the permafrost in the Siberian Arctic has been accelerated by the heat wave; and chaotic weather patterns have caused extreme flooding, drought and typhoons all over the world.



All ten recorded warmest years in UK are in last eighteen years and 2020 is likely to be the hottest year globally on record. Our climate is near to breaking point for our living planet. A coordinated international effort is urgently needed and the last chance will be the **COP 26 Climate Conference** which is now rescheduled for November 2021 in Glasgow.

What can we Christians do to deal with this destructive Climate Crisis? **Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)** have launched the *Climate Sunday* Initiative to call for all churches to take action in this critical year ahead. They have called for churches to start this September with a Climate Sunday Service to explore the theological and scientific basis of creation care. Churches will then commit to take long term action to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions. Joining forces with other churches and the wider community. They will add their names to a common call for the UK government to take the lead in the forthcoming **COP 26**. A national Climate Sunday event will be held on Sunday 5 September 2021 to celebrate the commitments made by churches that year and to show our political leaders our support for them to act boldly, justly and compassionately on the Climate Emergency.

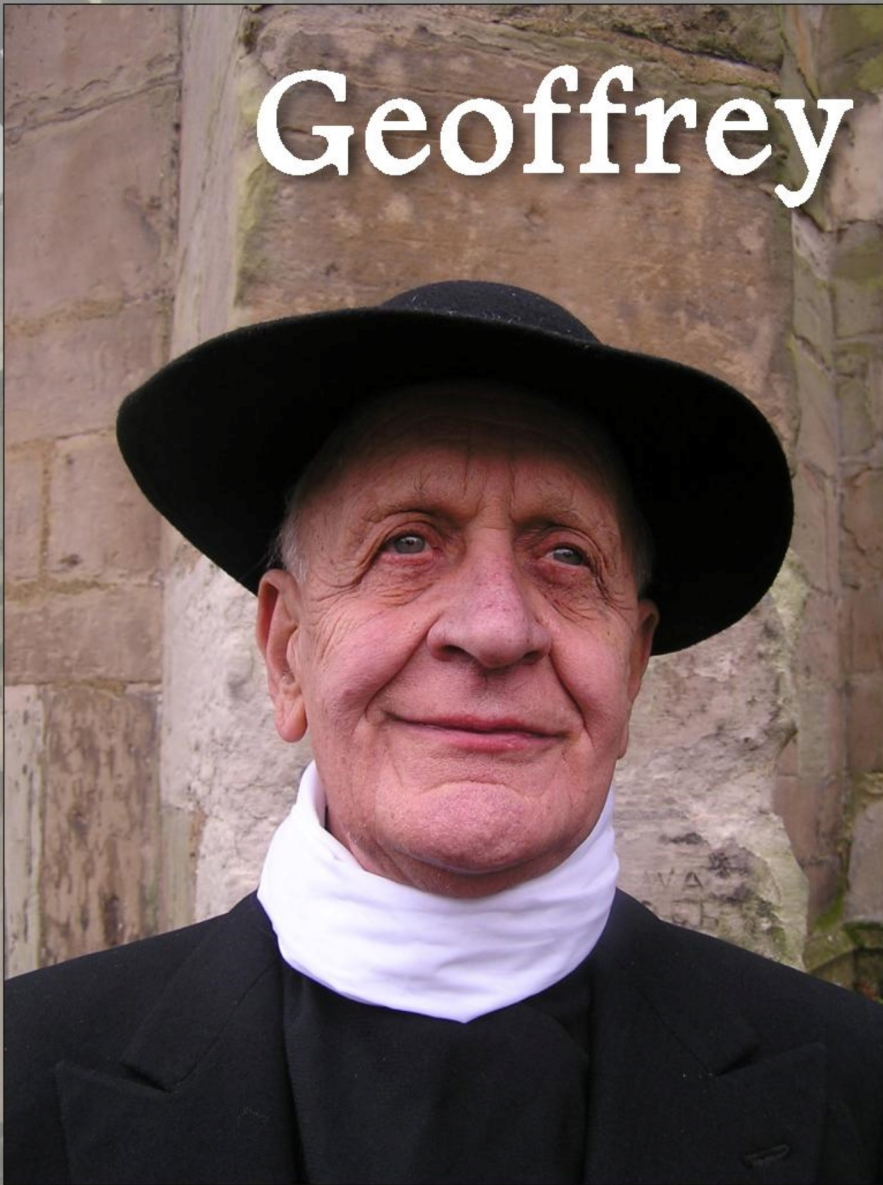
In order to rally all the churches to take part in this we need to encourage more churches to take on the Eco-Church program. At the moment four churches in Stratford are taking on the programme. Nationally only 3,400 out of 50,000 churches are members of one of the following schemes: Eco-Church, Eco-Congregation and Live Simply. With this programme churches will be encouraged to put **Creation Care** in their church mission, reduce the carbon **footprint** of the church building, improve the **biodiversity** of their church grounds, use **renewable energy**, support climate action and campaign for a **green economic recovery**. Congregations will be encouraged to reduce their personal carbon footprint in their consumption, transport and holidays as well as to support the renewable energy industry and new green technology.

UK churches have responded to the Covid-19 crisis with compassion, courage and sacrifice to show the love of Christ in practical ways. We should now take proactive steps to reshape our community for a just and sustainable future.



Geoffrey Lees

with
Trinity Players



Septimus Harding
in *Barchester*
Towers

Under the Greenwood Tree (as Old William Dewey); Coffee, Cake & Sonnets; Unhand Me, Squire





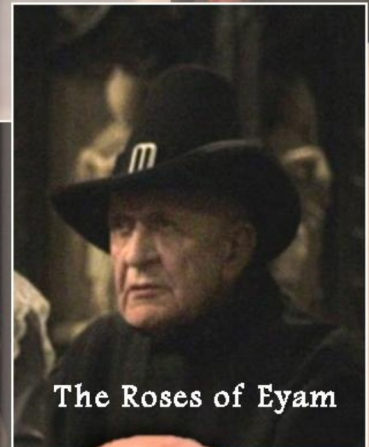
Under the Greenwood Tree: *singing with the Mellstock Choir*



Much Ado



Barchester Towers



The Roses of Eyam



Much Ado About Nothing
(as Verges)



The Message
of the Cross





Geoffrey Lees – The Player

Tributes in the Press to Geoffrey Lees concentrate, quite rightly, on his distinguished career and huge contribution to the town, but we, his friends in Trinity Players, knew that he was also unfailingly kind and great fun.

He was a founder member of the monthly Play Reading Group in June 2003 where his fluent sight reading, strong voice and gift for characterisation was a great asset. So when, in 2007, we became *Trinity Players*, he was the obvious choice for the Warden, Septimus Harding, in *Barchester Towers*, our first major production in the church. But would he, already in his eighties, remember a large part? I advised Sarah Cushing, playing his daughter, that if he 'dried', she might end the scene expeditiously; one evening assuming this had happened, Sarah eased him off the stage. In the interval he remonstrated with her in his customary courteous fashion. 'You went wrong, Sarah, you finished the scene when I still had more to say.' She took the reproof graciously.

When he played William Tranter in *Under the Greenwood Tree* I suggested that the old man be deaf, thus enabling other actors to repeat cues. Not necessary! He made William a great comic character, more decrepit at each performance (much more so than Geoffrey himself still working his allotment) though fortunately, he sang lustily in The Mellstock Choir!

Perhaps he was most amusing as Verges in *Much Ado About Nothing* making, with Widow Dogberry, one of the funniest pairings that I have ever seen in this Play. He was always full of ideas, especially so as the Shaman in Steve Newman's *My Grandfather Sleeps* for which he largely improvised his own costume, actions and incantations. These skills were necessary in Tony Boyd-Williams' *Acts of the Apostles* when Geoffrey maintained that he played seventeen parts.



He was a regular in our public Poetry Readings and later never missed a Saturday Live in the *Lounge* where he often read at least one of his own poems, many of the most beautiful being to his beloved wife, Doreen.

Geoffrey came to Play Reading Group at the beginning of this year before Lockdown, brought by his son, no longer providing the taxi service he always offered for carless Players, wherever they lived. When we can finally meet again Geoffrey's special chair will be empty but we will still have our memories of a special friend and Player.

Ursula Russell

Geoffrey will be remembered for many things throughout his distinguished life which I will leave to others to relate - but I will remember him as an amazingly accomplished, caring, humble man who was as ready with a quip as he was with a smile. There is no doubt that the twinkle went out of his eyes when Doreen passed away and our eternal hope must be that they are now re-united, at peace, with God. I pray it is so.

Helen Warrillow

Geoffrey Lees by Steve Newman

The first time I got to know Geoffrey Lees well was in the early 1990s when the two of us were elected to lead an assault against Wetherspoon's bid to take over what had been The World of Shakespeare, on Waterside, and turn it into a pub.

Our attack resulted in the creation of a formal public inquiry at Elizabeth House.

And it was during that inquiry I saw Geoffrey the politician at work: always quiet, always maintaining an air of dignity as he continually stared hard at Wetherspoon's boss, Tim Martin, who never flinched, and then at his sweating barrister, who invariably dropped his papers onto the floor. It was a great tactic that must have worked on many occasions in Stratford's Council Chambers.

At one point during the inquiry, which proved to be the last point, Martin's barrister asked Geoffrey if he knew a Steve Newman, to which Geoffrey replied yes; and was he an employee of the District Council? Yes, replied Geoffrey. Is he here today? There is a Steve Newman here today, Geoffrey answered, at which point I stood up and identified myself. And you work for the District Council, Mr Newman? No, I said. No? But I have paperwork here that states you are... It must be a different Steve Newman!.. at which point the head of the inquiry halted proceedings, effectively throwing out Martin's plans for a pub. It was all about holding your nerve, and Geoffrey had a briefcase full of nerve.

As an actor Geoffrey had even more nerve, and an excellent stage presence that could always steal a scene.



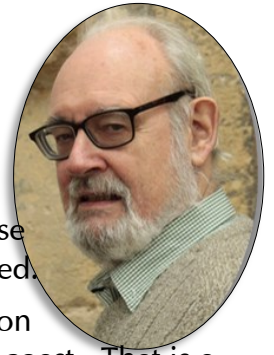
Geoffrey as the Shaman

I was delighted when Geoffrey agreed to perform in two of my plays. The first was as Genghis Khan's Shaman in *My Grandfather Sleeps*, where his brief was to respond in a wordless way to anything any of characters (mainly the Khan who often responded with the threat of a beheading) had to say: a sort of theatrical heckler. He played a similar part in *1914*, albeit as a mad verger only too ready to pull a gun to protect the vicar. His performances were a delight, especially an adlibbed Lord's Prayer in *1914* that was hugely emotional.

When I was the editor of *Trinity Times* Geoffrey was stalwart in his support, with a huge fund of knowledge; he could also work miracles when it came to distribution.

But above all else he was a man with love in his heart. God bless him.





What a disrupted summer. So many holiday plans biting the dust. So many of us – those who could travel at all – making do with something far more limited than they had hoped.

For us, grandiose plans for the Oberammergau Passion Play and for a Sister Cities reunion in Canada were replaced by a visit to a not entirely satisfactory cottage near the Suffolk coast. That is a special place for Ursula and her family, some of whom were able to join us. And it was good to be reminded that there is a world beyond Stratford, a place with big skies and fresh sea air. Yet I cannot help sympathising with a number of newspaper articles about the way in which lockdown has narrowed our horizons – in good ways, as well as others that are not so good.

The places in which we are placed really matter, and we need to learn to value those afresh. “Place” is an important concept in Christian faith. I am reminded of this by how often St Paul wrote to people in a particular city or even a specific extended household. (Paula Gooder’s book *Phoebe* gives a helpful picture of how that worked out in the first-century Christian communities in Rome.) And then there is St Benedict, who instructed his followers to commit to “stability in place” rather than wandering from monastery to monastery in search of enlightenment.

There are other places, as well as other people, and we need to be regularly reminded of that – especially at a time when the virus is causing sufferings elsewhere that we cannot begin to imagine. Our own long journey across the wide spaces of East Anglia was in some ways such a reminder. But “our place” really matters, and things like the current strong movement to support local businesses are really a positive side to all that we have been through.

Geoffrey Lees, whose life is celebrated elsewhere in these pages, was an example to many of us in respect of valuing “place”. He travelled widely in his profession as a civil engineer and an academic, and did good things across the world, for more people in more places than most of us have the opportunity to do. But he will be remembered by us above all for his love for **our** theatre, **our** river, and **our** swans – and not least for his ever-growing love for Holy Trinity, the building as well as the people (not least Trinity Players), and all they stand for. Here, in his pilgrimage, he visibly came home, and I vividly remember his late-in-life decision to seek Confirmation here, and all that it meant to him. And here he ended his earthly life, with family and friends around him. “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his!” (Numbers 23:10).

This place is precious, and our place in it is precious. We may enrich ourselves and others by travel, not just in the flesh but increasingly online, and we have benefited much from the (not always reliable) wonders of modern technology in terms of reaching out across the internet to those whom we could not touch physically. But if we lose our flesh and blood roots – our “stability in place” - we lose so much, not only for ourselves but in what we have to offer to the world. Paul Edmondson in a recent online sermon spoke of learning to “love the local” as a positive example of lockdown spirituality. He was so right.

RSC Theatre



Holy Trinity Church



Swan on the river



Geoffrey Lees

by Carole Askew

The Trinity Times was published again in the 1980s, after a gap of some years. Geoffrey told me, his wife, Doreen, had introduced subscriptions then and organised its distribution, which involved them both throughout the following years, with different editors. When Steve and Hilary Newman retired from their successful time as editor and assistant editor, respectively, in 2018, Geoffrey reluctantly decided to retire from his Subscription and Distribution role which he had continued with dedicated fortitude since the death of his beloved wife in January 2018. With Paul Lageu, I offered to help with this role to support a new editorial team and became responsible for the magazine's distribution.

Geoffrey invited me to his home one Friday afternoon in May 2018 to pass onto me all the distribution details. I walked up to his front door with some trepidation. I didn't know this kind, helpful and courteous, long serving, front pew churchgoer very well but knew I was taking on his longstanding role which he had undertaken and enjoyed for many years.

I need not have worried. For the next three hours Geoffrey had my full attention. He went through all the procedures he and Doreen had developed including using his beautiful old guillotine with which we cut paper up for his subscription name labels. This was also the start of my insight into his professional life and perhaps his recycling prowess. Names of subscribers were printed on the back of already printed papers of graphs and tables of highly technical road engineering work which I soon realised he had designed, tested and patented. This was the clever and innovative man I knew nothing about. Past subscribers will have had snippets of his work on the back of their name labels stapled every month to their magazines!

His pleasure of his full and active life with Doreen and his family in Stratford, along with his achievements and accolades in his professional and civic life, was evident and also was his delight in receiving a card with photograph, then on his mantelpiece, of The Queen, with Prince Philip, congratulating him and Doreen on their 70th wedding anniversary along with the July 2017 Trinity Times article on their long and happy married life.

I learnt first hand that Friday afternoon about a kind, family loving, sociable, clever and quietly exuberant, remarkable man, greatly missing his adored wife, who, through his own endeavours and attributes, was happily fulfilled with his exceptional life.

I also felt, since then, on Sunday mornings, walking down the aisle from communion towards Geoffrey sitting in the front row, when he would look me straight in the eye and always give me his wonderful big smile, that he was fine with my taking over from his long tenure of Trinity Times distribution. He and his presence in the front pew will be sadly missed, and long remembered. He was a true gentleman.

LOCKDOWN LIMERICKS

CHORAL ALTERNATIVES

The law says no singing in church,
which leaves our poor choir in the lurch.
Could they do it by winking
or frowning and blinking?
The vicar is doing research.



"Learning Uganda"

Arua became a city! We're not quite sure what this really means but people stayed up until midnight to go into the streets shouting and screaming for a good hour or so. We had no idea what was going on so weren't best pleased. Milly explained it all the following day - turns out she was up past midnight as well, keeping her neighbours awake a little further down the road.

We feel like we're only just beginning to gain some understanding of the culture here and starting to grasp why things work the way they do. Or as Eli (5) put it "*Mummy, I'm now learning Uganda*". Milly has been a great help in this and in addition to helping out with cooking and cleaning has become our unofficial language teacher as well. She's such a blessing and we're thankful for her every day. She keeps me sane when sometimes three out of the four boys are crying. She doesn't seem to judge the daily homeschool battles and helps me navigate visitors and their needs.

Life here is tough though. Milly, still smiling, explained that a relative had died of hunger with no one to look after him. He was an elderly widower whose four children were all either alcoholics or addicted to smoking opium.

Deep-rooted brokenness

We're learning of a huge deal of brokenness here and even though we've still only got to know a handful of people locally, there seems to be a common theme of family breakdown and addiction. As part of Tom's work, he's been involved in a programme to sensitise the community to the huge problem of gender-based violence (or GBV). This concept includes a wide range of areas, including physical, sexual, emotional & economic abuse based on gender norms and unequal power relationships and has by all accounts worsened during lockdown as children are out of school and fathers are out of work. Whilst most cases of GBV come under the title of *violence against women and girls*, GBV also includes violence against men and boys and our health department decided to focus on men as victims of GBV in the run up to the local date for Father's Day.

Amongst other activities there was a drawing competition for children to express their experiences of violence during the COVID lockdown. Seeing this artwork come in has been fascinating and equally harrowing – fascinating in the way that the children astutely depict alcohol and substance misuse as well as financial pressures in their drawings, but harrowing in the realisation that many of their pictures are based on personal experience. In the national violence against children study here across Uganda in 2018, researchers found that 75% of adults had experienced some form of violence in childhood - one in three girls had been a victim of some form of sexual violence, including the 10% of all girls who underwent the trauma of forced or pressured sex. The next step for us will be taking steps to try and address the underlying causes which will obviously be a huge challenge.

Aside from the GBV programme, Tom has been busy preparing (and delivering) some infection control training for health centre staff in light of COVID and ordering more protective equipment for the health centres as part of a programme sponsored by Irish Aid. He's enjoyed getting out and about, particularly enjoying seeing some patients at the health centres when he's visiting.



Joel loves to help Milly and Noble with jobs around the house



Tom taking the boys through the fascinating waste segregation segment of his infection control training for Health Centres in the Diocese.

cont.....

Learning Uganda cont.....



We're thankful that the boys are generally more settled and we're enjoying getting to know people in the local community. We're also thankful for some other expat families who we've been able to join in with for a small, weekly home church, as local church buildings remain closed.

We're thankful for daily opportunities to interact with different people but are conscious we need to be wise in our interactions. Life is generally more tiring here - trying to learn and understand a new language and not offend people by saying the wrong thing, loving and helping

people in need but also sussing out when people aren't being genuine and being careful not to become cynical.

Things to pray for:

- Continued energy, love and grace in our interactions with the people God brings into our lives each day.
- For us to keep God at the centre of our family as we live out life together in full view of Milly and Noble, both of whom come from reasonably complicated family homes.
- For protection for health centre staff in the diocese as coronavirus continues to be a major risk near the border and with some limited local transmission.
- For protection for all local people at risk of gender-based violence and for wisdom for us as we look to implement solutions addressing the practical problems whilst pointing firmly to Jesus.

Thanks again for all your prayer and support.

Blessings

Verity, Tom, Ezra, Eli, Simeon and Joel.



Andrea Blood's mother, Vera Hawkins, was one hundred in August.

Vera continues to be a subscriber to and regular reader of Trinity times.

The team at Trinity Times would like to congratulate Vera on her hundredth birthday and wish her all happiness for the future.



HOWLERS!

He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast. *Proverbs 15 v15*

ONE LINERS

Good to see optician C.P. Grey in Church Street in business again, along with its popular window typewriter joke:

Someone has stolen my box of anti-depressant tablets. I hope they are happy
.....

If you don't know what introspection is, you need to take a long, hard look at yourself.

I gave a talk to a group of back packers; they were on the edge of their seats. *Stewart Francis*

AND FINALLY... A speaker who was due to give a talk called 'Follow me, I know where I am going', failed to turn up at Woodmanstern Women's Institute. She had got lost. *Epsom Guardian*

A TYPOGRAPHICAL error spotted on a nature lovers' Facebook page by a listener to Radio 4's *News Quiz*: "We had a brilliant day nature watching. We saw two kingfishers, herons, cormorants, swans, ducks, two sparrow hawks and, to top it all off, we even saw a stoat chasing a rabbi."

Church magazines, of course, are very susceptible themselves to the occasional amusing typo:

A Baptist church newsletter reported that Mr and Mrs Brown had gone on holiday for 10 days ... and went on to say that their two daughters "are starving with relatives during their absence."

The reverend has derived great benefits from his holiday and is returning to his cuties. *Church Gazette*

The Seniors group will have a picnic on Saturday. Each person is asked to bring a friend, a vegetable, and a sweet, all in a covered dish.

Remember the church jumble sale. We have a gents three-speed bicycle, also two ladies for sale, in good running order. *Harnham Parish*

Compiled by Pat Pilton



"But did they plough the fields and scatter at a safe distance?"



If you use any of the advertisers in this magazine please will you let them know where you saw their advertisement.



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The Revd Jenny Rowland	01789 415 548	The Revd Canon Andrew Dow	01789 417 852
The Venerable Brian Russell	01789 266 316	The Revd John Hall-Matthews	01789 414 182
The Revd Graham Wilcox	01789 551 759	The Revd Diane Patterson	01789 266 453
The Revd Roger Taylor	01789 778 471		

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St. Helen's, Clifford Chambers	Pat Woolvin	01789 264 256

Other Contacts

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Bell Ringers	Charles Wilson	01789 295 467
Bereavement Support Team	Gina Lodge	01789 204 850
Safeguarding Officer	Jane Armitage	01789 297 652
Trinity Ladies	Gina Lodge	01789 204 850
Electoral Roll Officer	Tim Raistrick	01789 509 885
Friends of Shakespeare's Church	Alan Haigh	01789 290 128
Holy Trinity in the Community	Steve Jarvis	01789 266 316
Lay Chaplains	Keith Payne	01789 266 316
PCC Secretary	Miriam Dow	01789 417 852
PCC Treasurer	Mike Warrillow	01789 298 928
Friends of the Music	Josephine Walker	01789 266 316
Home Communion	Steve Jarvis	01789 266 316
Stewardship Officer	Chris Kennedy	01789 299 785
Trinity Players	Ursula Russell	01789 204 923
Trinity Tots	Phil Harper	07791 005 696
Pastoral Contact Co-ordinator	Gillian Nunn	01789 415 830
Welcome Team	Helen Warrillow	01789 298 928
Sunday Coffee organisers	Tina Hillyard	01789 551 739
	Diane Edwards	01789 296 396



Do you enjoy looking at our lovely flowers in church?

Can you help us by joining our group?

We have recently lost several long-standing members of our flower-arranging group, and we would love to recruit a few more helpers. We work in small teams so the commitment is only a couple of hours a month.

No special skills are needed. Just enthusiasm and a love of flowers!

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All smiles as bells ring out once more at Holy Trinity

by Marion Mitchell

Some of you may have seen the article by Ben Lugg in the Stratford Herald on 6 August. It was a good piece, celebrating the fact that as we have an Ellacombe at Holy Trinity it has been possible for two of our bell ringers to make the bells sound again, while maintaining social distancing.

Regular worshippers and tourists alike whilst walking in the churchyard have been heard singing along to the hymns being played out on the Ellacombe before the 4pm service each Sunday.

The system was devised in 1821 by Reverend Henry Thomas Ellacombe of Gloucestershire, who first had such a system installed in Bitton in 1822. He created the system as an alternative to using his local ringers, and so did not have to tolerate their behaviour, which he saw as unruly.

In reality, however, it required very advanced and rare expertise for one person to ring changes, which most churches did not have. The sound of a chime was a feeble substitute for the rich sound of swinging bells, and the apparatus fell out of fashion. Consequently, the apparatus was removed from many towers leaving holes in the ceiling, and often frames without ropes.

In towers like ours, where the apparatus remains in working order, it can still be used to play simple call change sequences, hymn tunes and carols at Christmas. The apparatus is also used when insufficient full circle ringers are available, or where it is no longer permitted or viable to swing the bells such as our current Covid 19 situation.

There are known to be over 400 Ellacombe chimes in working order in the UK and at least 40 in the other parts of the world.

Our Tower Captain, Charles Wilson says 'I am delighted that the sound of the bells is once more being heard across the town. Although the Ellacombe Chiming Apparatus makes the bells sound quieter, nevertheless the tunes which have been performed have been much appreciated and it is great that this is hopefully the first tentative step towards returning to normal ringing again in the not too distant future'



Charles Wilson and Peter Bridges.

