

# FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS

## FORDINGBRIDGE AND RINGWOOD PARISH MAGAZINE

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### Fr Paul Says.....



#### A heartfelt thank you to everyone

The weather stayed fine, and a gentle breeze kept everyone cool. The music from our two wonderful musicians drifted across the lawn at Fordingbridge church and everyone seemed to be relaxed and enjoying the occasion. The 'garden party' on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June, when people from our two parishes came together to celebrate my 40 years of ordained ministry – or rather ministerial priesthood – was an immense success.

A big word of thanks is due to everyone, especially the parish council and the coordinator. I really do appreciate the support of so many and the hard work which was involved. And thanks to everyone for the generous gifts and the cards with all their kind messages. I am especially grateful to our Coordinating Pastor for the New Forest, Fr. David Adams, who spoke about me at length in

## Forty and Counting!



*(Please don't misinterpret my headline – it is not his fortieth glass! Ed)*

Over 100 guests joined Father Paul on the lawns of Our Lady of Sorrows to celebrate with him his fortieth anniversary as an ordained priest. Father had been given just one simple directive – to relax and enjoy the party (is that two simple directives....?) and hopefully he felt very able to do so in the company of so many parishioners and friends.



commemorative cake, beautifully crafted by Maggie Spiers especially for the occasion. (Note to cake lovers – the cake, baked coincidentally to a forty year old recipe, disappeared in moments to the clear delight of the baker..). Jonny and Jackie Foyle provided a medley of wonderful songs throughout the afternoon to an appreciative audience.

In addition to a personal gift from people in both our parishes, Father was also presented with two beautiful specimen trees, selected and grown for him by Sue Broadbent, and a hybrid tea rose – 'Special Anniversary'.

Father David Adams offered a warm and generous vote of thanks for all his work, both as a priest in all the parishes he had served since 1984 and as a key leader of clergy and advisor to successive bishops as Vicar General for the Portsmouth Diocese.

Guests' own picnics were supplemented by bubbly to toast Father Paul's wonderful response to his calling. Ice cream ensured Father Paul could satisfy his renowned sweet tooth, together with other refreshments throughout the afternoon. Father Paul completed the formalities by cutting a



very generous words.

**The Liturgy of the Word (Continued)**

**The Homily**

The challenge for the homilist is to connect the readings with the lived experience of the people who have been listening. He must do his best to help everyone absorb the message, apply it to their lives so as to become its active presence in their lived experience. Homilies take a long time to prepare and require prayer, research, and reflection before anything is written.

**The Creed**

To recite the creed together is to give our assent each week to the faith of the Church and the message that we have heard proclaimed.

**The General Intercessions.**

Having listened to the word of God, the biddings invite us to respond to the word by praying for the Church and the world. Each bidding or intercession involves the announcement of an intention after which is a silence of 10 or 15 seconds. The silence is there so that we can pray individually for the announced intention. Our personal prayer is completed by the general prayer which asks that the Lord “Hear our prayer”.

**Weekday Readings**

The weekday readings are proclaimed according to a two-year cycle. The whole lectionary aims at presenting the entire Bible in three years, though out of necessity and with regard to brevity, some sections are missed. The lectionary takes care to ensure that they who mystery of salvation is proclaimed.

That completes my brief comments on the Liturgy of the Word. At it ends we prepare to be nourished at the second table, that of the eucharist.

**Lectio Divina**

As we leave Mass on Sunday, we are not meant to leave the message that has been proclaimed behind. Rather, we must take the message with us and continually reflect upon it in prayer. We are fortunate because we have an online ‘Lectio Divina Group’. I am really grateful to those who run this group and keep it going. The details are in the Newsletter. The method of scriptural prayer can be done either in a group or on one’s own.

Here is the method:

- Choose and read a passage of scripture and reflect upon it in silence.
- Focus on the word or phrase that struck you or had a particular resonance. In a group this word or phrase would be shared.
- Read the passage again.
- In the silence ask the question

Sincere thanks to everyone, from both Our Lady of Sorrows and Sacred Heart, who contributed so generously to the preparations for this important occasion in the life of our community. Father Paul, in responding to Father David, reflected on the value he had always placed on the people as being key to the healthy life of any parish; on this day, his congregation had responded with the utmost generosity.



(Larry Bartel et al)

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## A Lifetime of Ministry

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This year I celebrate forty years of priesthood and forty-one years of ordained ministry.

I was ordained deacon by Archbishop Couve de Murville at Oscott on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 1983. It was Bishop Anthony Emery who ordained me to the priesthood at St. Edward’s Windsor in 1984.

The journey to ordained ministry began sixty years ago in South London. I was an altar server at our parish church and the priests suggested that I should think about becoming a priest myself. The idea stayed with me, but I did not act on it until I was twenty nine. I became a primary school teacher in 1979, rising to the dizzy heights of becoming a deputy head in 1975.

Ordained in 1984, I was immediately appointed to English Martyrs Reading where I became chaplain to two schools and the Royal Berkshire Hospital. By 1985, Bishop Emery moved me to the Cathedral in Portsmouth where I remained until after his death and the arrival of Bishop Crispian. In Portsmouth I became a prison chaplain and chaplain to various schools and the then polytechnic – now the University of Portsmouth.

Bishop Crispian moved me in 1989 to New Alresford giving me the diocesan responsibility for Religious Education. Being the director was a full-time job with several personnel. The people of Alresford were, like the people of Ringwood and Fordingbridge, both patient and tolerant. I would travel each day to the Religious Education Centre, first at LSU in Southampton and later, when it moved, to Park Place Pastoral Centre. I left Alresford in 1998.

1998 saw my arrival in Fareham and Portchester as Parish Priest. This was an interesting experience because I had been the deputy head in Fareham’s parish school ten years before. I was greeted warmly by ex-students, some of whom had babies in prams. My time at Fareham lasted for four years during which I was given a new diocesan job as ‘Vicar for Clergy’. This involved in-service education and supervising personnel and disciplinary matters relating to priests. This diocesan work continued under two bishops until I asked Bishop Philip to be relieved of it two years ago. He agreed.

After four very happy years in Fareham and Portchester I was moved to St. Francis de Sales at Wash Common, where I was made very welcome. My travelling to Park Place continued as well as many visits across the diocese. I could take you to all the parish churches in the diocese without a sat nav.



Three years in Wash Common and my time there was up. Monsignor Peter Doyle, who was Parish Priest of St. Peter and the Winchester Martyrs at Winchester, was appointed Bishop of Northampton and I succeeded him. I was there for 12 years and had the great honour of being made an ecumenical canon of Winchester Cathedral, which I still am. Winchester was a busy place with a hospital and a school. I was assisted by a number of seminarians and assistant priests. With the support of a supremely able project manager we were able to raise the funds to build the Pastoral Centre in Winchester, which is now widely used.





“What is the Lord saying to me in this word or phrase? How does it apply to me in my personal situation. This, too, could be shared with the group.

- Read the passage again.
- In the following silence, ask the question “What is the word or phrase inviting me to change in my life?”
- Read the passage again and end with a prayer of your choosing.

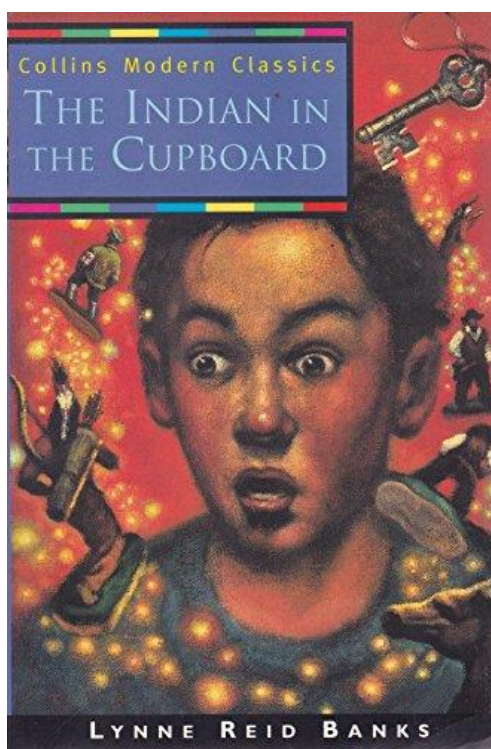
In a group setting it is always important to listen to others and never to comment on what someone else has said and certainly to hold it in confidence and as something sacred.

With my time at Winchester coming to an end, Bishop Philip sent me to Ringwood and Fordingbridge and I have been here for seven years. As I said in response to Fr. David Adam’s speech at the party, I am grateful for many things in my life as a priest and I would like to mention two of them. The first is the faith of the people in the parishes and their commitment to the Eucharist and weekly Sunday Mass. This is, and has always been, a great support to me, and I know, to most priests. The second great gift is the willingness of everyone to participate in the life of the parish. Whether it is in the liturgy, the social life, the care of the sick, the administration and care of the property and pastoral life or the willingness to continue in the work of building community and communion. Both these aspects are crucial to our mission.

The Church has changed hugely since I was ordained 40 years ago. What do I think our priorities should be now? I think there are several. Ensuring that our liturgy is worthy and participative, and that music has an integral part. Ensuring that our communities are welcoming and that we engender a sense of belonging by being hospitable and kind to new arrivals and visitors. By going out of our way to engage with young people and to include them in the life of the parish. By forming teams for adult catechesis and for visiting homes in the parishes to extend an invitation to ‘come and see’ what being a Christian is like.

(Fr Paul)

Reading Recommendations



When I heard recently that Lynne Reid Banks had died, I thought it might be nice to review couple of her books. However, on re-reading The L-Shaped Room I decided that it would not be suitable for inclusion in a publication read by respectable people like ourselves.

But she did write this gorgeous and sweet children’s story. Today, It probably would not be approved by the ‘Sensitivity Reader’ (real job description) of any publishing house that valued its reputation, dealing as it does with the issue of First Nation people (ie. Cowboys and Indians) but it is lovely and gentle and I shall certainly read it to my grandchildren.

Omri was not overly impressed with two of his birthday presents, a plastic Indian from his friend and an old small cupboard found on a skip from his brother. He put the Indian inside the cupboard and went to sleep. However, he work in the morning to a pattering and a tapping coming from the cupboard. When he opened he found that the Indian was now a tiny man, no longer made of plastic, but of flesh and wearing leggings made of leather. For Omri it was ‘the most marvellous thing that had ever happened to him in his life’. He was fascinated by his new friend (although the ‘friend’, Little Bull,

# The Isle of Wight Ultra



As many of you know, at the beginning of last month, Georgina and I and four friends set off at the crack of dawn to take on the first half of the Isle of Wight Ultra - walking from Chale in the south of the Island round the coast to Cowes, directly opposite, and purportedly 50km.

We were blessed with glorious weather, wonderful views and amazing camaraderie from all around us, so started off in very high spirits, buoyed up by amazing pastries and croissants at the first rest stop. However, for me, that is when things began to go downhill, and, very sadly, at the second stop, at 26.5km (16.5 miles), I was forced to admit defeat due to horrendously painful bleeding blisters, joining David in the support vehicle and feeling utter relief at taking off my boots and bloody socks (and having a refreshing beverage overlooking Yarmouth harbour.....I did feel a tiny bit



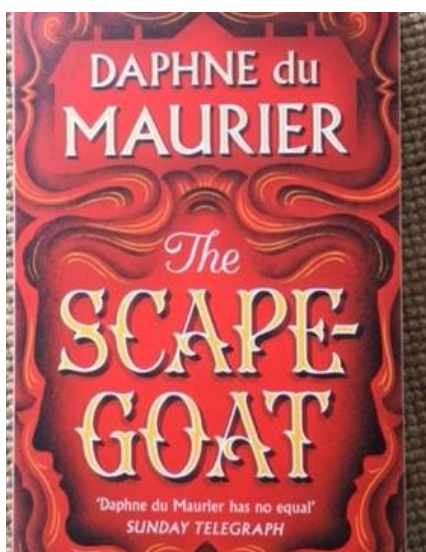
was angry and demanded food, 'fire-water', a woman). What should Omri feed it on? Should he make him a teepee?

Fast forward a few days and his friend comes round and demands to see this extraordinary thing. He has in his pocket a plastic cowboy. When Omri is not looking he places the cowboy in the cupboard and, lo and behold, they have this very tricky situation on their hands.....

There is a sweet scene when the boys take the tiny enemies into school. The men are so frightened in Omri's pocket that they cling to each other.

And gradually a friendly truce is reached...

The story is obviously a product of its time, a time when we watched Westerns on TV, where the cowboys always win. But this book is not like a traditional Western, and is a delightful story for both boys and girls aged 8 to 1



This is such a fabulous book. I am reading it for at least the fourth time. It could be called a psychological thriller and I am thinking of giving it to my teenage grandson who is about the age that I was when I first read it.

John's life as a London lecturer is empty; he has no family and few friends. On holiday in France, in a rural railway station, bored and depressed, he comes face to face with his double. His double, Jean de Gue, sees this as an opportunity to escape the complications of his life as the head of a wealthy household containing many difficult women - his mother, his wife, his sister, and his sister-in-law. John wakes the morning after this encounter in a strange hotel, his money and passport missing, and wearing the clothes of Jean de Gue, who has escaped in his car. And so John steps into the life of another man.....

John takes his responsibilities as head of the chateau seriously, more seriously than his double, and learns about the complicated family dynamics from the sharp-tongued mother, the ever-watchful child, the seductive sister-in-law. He makes several blunders, but after a week has managed to

guilty!)

Fortunately, the others were made of sterner stuff, and all carried on to the bitter end, which wasn't 50km, but 53km (33 miles)! Apparently the second half was much worse than the first, with soup-like mud to wade through, not nearly such beautiful scenery and long stretches of hard road. The fact that the distance was longer than stated nearly broke them mentally as night fell, and as they crossed the line, just after 10pm, they looked utterly exhausted, unable to take another step.



To say I was proud of them was a massive understatement. They just about made it into the car, but getting up the stairs to the lounge from the car deck on the last ferry back to the mainland took a good five minutes, with hot chocolate providing a slight pick-me-up, before the return descent. Wrapped in blankets and moving at a snail's pace, they looked like waifs and strays.

Once home, Georgina collapsed into bed, nursing blisters of her own, but so so proud of her achievement. In her words, she was never going to give up - she was doing this for Cathie and Whiskers. And the result? A massive £1,500 raised for Cancer Research in their memory.

Thank you so much to everyone who supported and donated - it has meant a huge amount to us both.  
(Alex and Georgina Downng)

## CAFOD Plant Sale

Last month I wrote about the Flower and Art Festival being held this weekend on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> at the Church of the Ascension and the Village Hall here in Woodlands near Verwood from 12 noon to 6pm

Well, we are in the middle of the preparations as I write and so far, so good. I am sure we will have to be adaptable on the day and cope with last minute changes, but I am also sure it will be worth it to be able to use our lovely village church to show the creativity that is within our community to a wider audience.

We had a bit of an incident in the run up to the Festival when one of our five Platinum Jubilee trees was accidentally knocked down by the contractor mowing the village green and football field. Not a great start to getting the village looking as good as possible for the Festival: but as ever there is a silver lining to every storm (in a tea cup...)

When the trees were planted in November 2022, so not quite two years ago, there was a big debate in the village about what type of tree, where to plant, size etc. As the professional gardener now retired on the team, I advised that we went for a number of British native smaller trees and planted whips rather than grown on trees. An alternative and popular view was to plant a single tree, size large as possible, and probably an oak, within our budget. After much debate, my advice was taken and we planted four crab apples and one bird cherry. The whips were only twelve inches high and most of the cost was on the protection system for each little tree including rolled steel mesh deer protection. The planting ceremony was interesting as I had to give a little presentation of why we were putting in such small specimens as a memorial to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. They certainly looked a bit mean and insignificant.

And here are the reasons:

Smaller trees grow on much more quickly than larger specimens: generally, they will catch up and exceed the growth of the larger trees in about three to five years as the larger specimens get such a shock in the replanting that they do very little growth in the first few years after planting. As they are not growing on strongly, they are also more susceptible to pests and diseases.

The second reason is ongoing care. A semi mature tree standing about two meters high when planted (tree size is generally measured as diameter of the trunk but it's easier for most people to understand using height measurement) will require watering with at least fifty litres of water, preferably a hundred litres and watering every two weeks during the growing season... if there is little rain... and our summers are generally getting hotter and drier. I really couldn't see how we would reliably get this quantity of water to the trees, sited on the village green and away from any water point, during their first two years.

So the incident with the contractors tractor was a good opportunity to have a close look at how the 4 remaining were getting on. And the answer is pretty well: three crab apples in full leaf at one point eight meters tall, looking very healthy. The biodegradable shrub shelters and the steel mesh deer protection had worked well. One bird cherry had failed and had been replaced earlier this year from a spare I had kept and grown on. So, this one will take a little longer to grow on and catch up with its friends as it is already a one point two meter high specimen and will need a little bit of care this next two years. It was interesting to note that my spare, grown on in a pot in my courtyard garden without shrub shelter and deer protection and with regular watering, had not grown on as well as the crab apples out on the village green.



make the lives of all of them better. John himself has found a sense of belonging. But of course it doesn't last. Events take a dramatic and interesting twist following the sudden return of the real Jean de Gue.

The situation is implausible (how is everyone except the dog fooled by this deception?) but somehow believable and compelling in a horrific sort of way. A good book to take on holiday with you.

(Penny Sharp)

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## Poetry Please!

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MAX

My name is Max the Doberman, a handsome black and tan  
 And when my folk go off to work I spend the day with Gran.  
 My life is so exciting, I find lots of things to do.  
 You really would be quite surprised at the things I find to chew!  
 There's Granny's knitting for a start, it really is a lark  
 To pull off all the stitches and race around the park.  
 And then there is the problem of the old tom cat next door,  
 I'm afraid he'll come and get me with his frightening teeth and claws.  
 He's got a little sister, she is quite fond of me,  
 Comes creeping through the hedges when he's catching mice for tea.  
 She purrs and tries to groom me that I find rather nice,  
 Even though I'm eight stone three (and haven't any lice)  
 But wait I hear a rattle, a key is in the door,  
 My folk are coming home from work, I haven't time for more.

(Margaret Fraser)

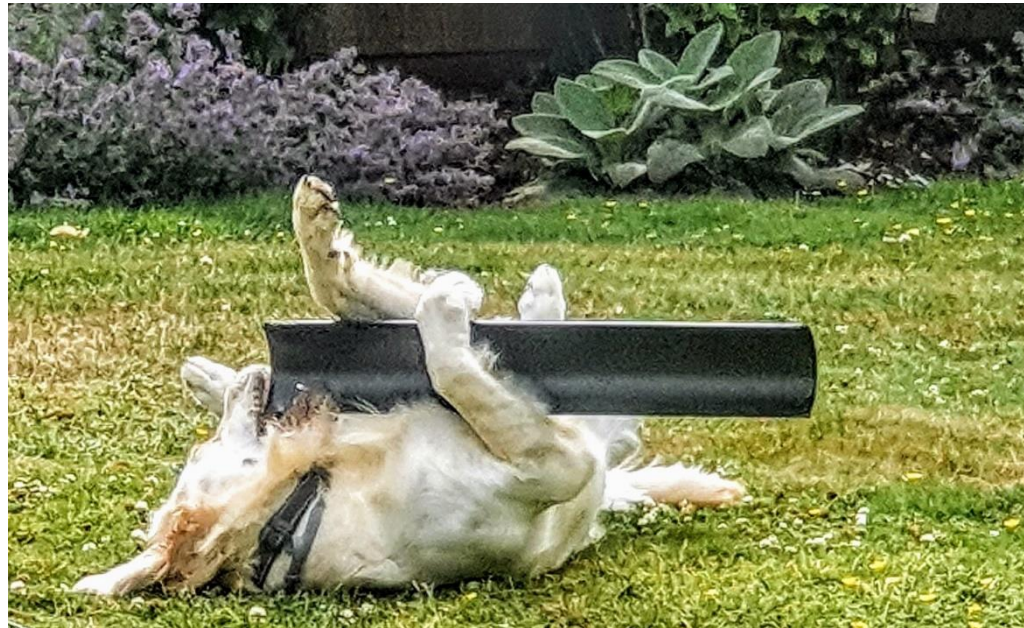
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## Betty Overill

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Betty was a long standing member of



So I am feeling quite pleased with myself, and am looking forward in a couple of years to enjoying looking at a little copse of crab apples, and hopefully a bird cherry, on the green as our village memorial to the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

(Sheila Wade)

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## Fabulous Forest!

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Well, The Forest is at it's best this time of year; dry, leafy and welcoming. Here is a lovely leafy glade, and this month I'm just going to suggest you get up here and try it for yourselves!



(Chris Basham)

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## Misericords

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Have you ever found it hard to stand through the reading of a long text, a solemn ceremony, an interminable service? Admit it – we all have! Can you imagine how it must be for a poor priest? Miserable! Well, the medieval clergy had the answer: misericords.

If you look at the stalls in the choir in many large churches you will see that, like cinema seats, the seats tip up as shown in the example above, where one of them is up, while its neighbour is down. See the little ledge on the upturned stall? On that, the wily Canon could rest his rear and take his ease but still give the appearance of standing. His misery would be reduced by the misericord! You will find such seating at

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## Gardener's Corner

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**Q. What do you call twenty gardeners attending one garden?**

**A. A Score!**



And so it was that twenty horticulturalists duly attended to a little enhancement of the gardens at Our Lady of Sorrows ahead of Father Paul's 40<sup>th</sup> celebrations. Such was the work rate that, by early afternoon, the space looked an absolute delight in readiness for the garden party the following day.

The team dug, mowed trimmed and planted to immense effect. The great fir hedge had been carefully sculpted by Margot 'n' Dave ahead of this big group effort, enabling the rest of the team to concentrate on mowing the lawns, adding colour to the borders on the main path, removing stumps to avoid trip hazards and - in the case of John, Nic, Ben and Steve – to erect the marquee that would prove vital to ensuring the actual day was sunny and warm - the marquee thus rendered redundant!

A generous brunch was provided by more wonderful volunteers, Stephanie, Anne Hammond and Penny (whose home-baked ginger cake was a spectacular



Fordingbridge parish. I remember her from the time we arrived in 1954 as Betty-who-plays-the-organ. She and my sister became great friends and, one way or another, I suppose, she seems to have been a fixture in my life. She and Teresa went on holiday together and she always found time to talk to the opinionated child that was me.

Although she moved away to London, she continued her connection with the parish and, on her return, picked up where she left off, playing the organ again and managing church music. She also did a great deal more for us, being Secretary for a time and taking part in several ministries for many years.

Particularly, I remember her for persevering with visiting my parents when they were in decline always taking an interest in my children, and playing Titania in one of Mrs. Pats' pantomimes, which might have left a few of you thinking!. She left the parish herself when her own health broke down but returned on 11<sup>th</sup> of June to be buried in our churchyard along with my parents and her many friends. Rest in peace Betty!

(Chris Basham)

Salisbury, Christchurch and many other cathedrals and minsters.

And now for the sinful bit; the carpenters who made these devices were well aware that the undersides were never to be seen – so....they could get up to carving anything they liked and that's just what they did, so let's just say there are many examples of *natura naturans* to be found Ahem.....

In Salisbury we have very nice floriate designs – so no use looking there.

(Chris Basham)

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### End Bits

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Thank you as always to all contributors!

This edition has been, for some reason, a nightmare to produce – put it down to technology and my ineptitude! Nevertheless we have got what you see. Something corrupted my template and, as a result, there are fewer pictures than I would have liked.

Thank you for the very many pictures – I was overwhelmed! It might seem a good idea to send me the lot to chose from, but please make your own selection for yourselves before sending – half a dozen is a good number – and I like simple batches of jpgs, so no fancy packages and systems I find hard to work with.

There were so mang excellent and and amusing photographs of the party, I would like to suggest that somebody – not me – prints them up and makes a display of them in the foyer where everyone can see them!

Chris

addition to the menu) - enabling a quick review of progress so far and ensuring that energy levels were maintained for the final push.

Anne Roberts defies belief – ant-like in her capacity to lift way more than her own body weight in giant sacks of garden cuttings. John Singleton is a walking, breathing titan of the power washer and Jill Coke could make plants flourish vibrantly in arid desert. Sue Broadbent arrived with a vehicle-full of plants to add still more colour to the garden, while Steve Walker proved the outright master of the hoe as he banished every unwanted piece of delinquent plant life (weeds to the uninitiated – Ed.) from the sloping paths. And Father Paul ensured that his rose garden had never looked so glorious. All that was needed now was a party fit for such a garden.....



(Larry Bartel and team)