

FOREST EDGE NEWS

THE PARISHES OF LEAFIELD WITH WYCHWOOD, FINSTOCK WITH FAWLER,
RAMSDEN AND WILCOTE

February 2021

www.forestedgebenefice.co.uk

Issue 269

Another Year Another Lockdown

I don't suppose anyone was sorry to see the back of 2020. It had been an 'annus horribilis' for the World., as H.M. The Queen might have said.

And now we find ourselves in 2021 and hoping and praying that it will be an improvement on the Old Year. However we are still in Lockdown and numbers of Coronavirus casualties continue to rise. Of course the vaccine is a great cause for hope and we thank God for the Scientists' skill and the Medics' care and for all those who are working to keep us fed and looked after in many different ways. But people are still afraid. Isolation and loneliness will continue to lower people's wellbeing and self esteem. Mental health issues will be one of the many long term problems of this pandemic.

'Depression' is something of an umbrella term. It varies in its severity and manifests itself in different ways. But it is very real and so unpleasant that you wouldn't wish it on your worst enemy. For some people it is a feeling of hopelessness and worthlessness. Everything seems sad and grey.

I have experienced depression twice in my life and in my case it could better be described as severe anxiety. You go into very frightening panic attacks, even though you don't have anything in particular to fear. Half of you knows this is not right but you feel helpless to stop it. In periods of depression it is sometimes impossible to function in a normal way. I remember thinking of myself as a machine where parts of the engine were malfunctioning, pistons, nuts and bolts all flying about and damaging the mechanism even more.

I was lucky/fortunate/blessed because I had kind friends who took care of me and helped enormously to deal with this bad time. I relied on them. I was also fortunate that there was no pandemic or lockdown then. I now worry and I pray for anyone in that sort of situation who cannot be with their friends and loved ones. Who cannot get the help they need.

Perhaps you know someone who is suffering at the moment? Perhaps you are feeling more 'down' than usual? What can any of us do?

Firstly although you can't meet friends you can still talk on the phone or even have a Zoom call. I think talking is essential, even if you are so low that all you can do is cry. Remember that you are loved and good, true, friends won't mind. There are also professional organisations you could use and you will find details on page 7. Seek medical help. There is nothing to be ashamed of. Just because the illness is mental it is real and can be cured. I remember feeling guilty about using anti-depressants but a vicar friend said there was nothing wrong with this and, "who knows what is meant by the 'Means of Grace' anyway?"

Another problem I experienced as a Christian was that I could not pray. Just at a time when it would have helped so much I found it impossible. I was too wrapped up in my own difficulty. The same kind vicar friend organised for a convent in Berkshire to pray for me everyday. The thought of a group of nuns mentioning me each day was so encouraging! Do not be afraid to ask someone to pray for you if you would like to.

Routine is also helpful. Have certain, easy things to do at the same time every day. Just listening to the same programme on TV or radio will do...as long as it's something you like! And concentrate on the things you do enjoy, tasks which are a pleasure. Most other things can wait.

Think of a few things you like about yourself or things you might be good at. St Paul once wrote what I have always considered good advice: "*whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is fair, whatever is pure, whatever is acceptable, whatever is commendable, if there is anything of excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—keep thinking about these things.*"

And there many beautiful, good things to reflect on. Spring is coming and already the snowdrops are out. Every night the stars put on a light show for free!

Breathing exercises can ease 'panic attacks' and above all, remember, this bad time will pass!

Forest Edge Benefice Church Services

Due to ever changing circumstances, please see the benefice website for the latest information regarding services:

www.forestedgebenefice.co.uk

If the news gets you down, don't listen to it! The world won't end just because you're not fretting over it. Take up some form of exercise. There's evidence that exercise can help lift your mood. Even fresh air and sunshine help.

Avoid too much alcohol. I know I'm a fine one to talk but in spite of seeming like an escape route, alcohol is actually a depressant.

The Old Book of Common Prayer has a lovely section in The Communion Service which reads:

"Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all that truly turn to him.

Come unto me all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

It goes on to quote other inspiring lines of Scripture. I understand that 'comfortable' is one of the many words in BCP which has changed its meaning since the sixteenth century but even in the modern sense of the word, the Bible is full of 'comfortable words'. It's worth remembering some, like, "I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8) *Ed*





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Ramsden and Finstock hit by floods

Sometimes recently life has seemed like one disaster after another. Like Ancient Egyptians we have suffered from disease, storms and on Wednesday 23rd December we got the floods. The ground was sodden after several days of rain and so much fell within about an hour that morning that the ground could not hold any more. The drains too were unable to cope.

There were floods in many parts of the county but Witney, Hailey, Poffley End, Ramsden and Finstock were particularly badly hit. Water poured down Ramsden High Street as though it were a river. Several houses were flooded and The Royal Oak only just escaped due to good defensive sandbags. Fire engines were summoned and stationed themselves in Lower End where they stayed pumping out water for the rest of the day and where several villagers, returning from Witney, were obliged to leave their cars and wade home.

In Finstock too, the lower parts of the village received the flood water from higher ground. The water brought a huge mudslide down the footpath from behind the pub and deposited a mountain of stone and sludge in the High Street. Simon Jones has used much of it to improve the accessibility of Dark Lane. I am grateful to Heather Dean for posting this dramatic photograph taken outside The Plough. (Top Right) And to residents of Delly End for recording the scene of water flowing off the fields near Ramsden.



Advice from the Chairman of Ramsden Parish Council

It is important that every house which had flood water entering their property informs Laurence King individually. This is to do with confidentiality and why everyone must personally inform him. The extent is an important factor for Laurence King. Please inform your neighbours, who were flooded, about this necessity.

His email address is

LaurenceKing@publicagroup.uk

His role is 'Lead Flood Risk Management Engineer' at WODC

Regards,
Clive



"The rains came down and the floods came up"
Top: The Plough, Finstock Above: Fields near Ramsden Left: Whiteoak Green



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Wit and Wisdom

“The only way to have a friend is to be one.”
– *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

“If you’re too open-minded, your brains will fall out.” *Lawrence Ferlinghetti*

“No-one can make you feel inferior without your permission.”
– *Eleanor Roosevelt*

“It’s not the words of our enemies that we remember, but the silence of our friends”. *Martin Luther King*.

“The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter.”
Winston Churchill

“Like Bob Dylan said at the Hall of Fame ‘love and peace is one thing but we all have to have forgiveness too’.” – *George Harrison*

“But if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.” *1 John 1:7*

How we celebrated Christmas



Christmas celebrations were much curtailed this year. No big parties and no carol singing. No midnight mass and even our Christmas morning services saw people sitting far apart and only listening to a few carols.

Finstock Church was and still is unable to open for logistic reasons. But in Ramsden and Leafield we were still able to celebrate Christ’s birth even if in a more low key way!

Leafield villagers enjoyed a churchyard service of lessons and carols on the evening of the 20th December, with the carols being led by Keith Harris on his guitar.



With villagers spread out around St. Michael’s churchyard, we were all able to sing our favourite carols in safety. The doors at the West end of the church were open wide so all the lights

and Christmas lights shone out and the crib and nativity were positioned so that all could see them. It was a very moving and joyful service in these difficult times.

Update about local Covid vaccinations

As of week ending January 22nd

The local GPs are double checking that all the over 80s have now had their FIRST Covid vaccination.

If anyone out there is an octogenarian patient of the Nuffield, Cogges, Eynsham or Windrush Practices and HASN'T had their first jab, could they please contact their own Practice as soon as possible.

And if you know anyone in these categories, please pass on the message.

The rest of us will have to be patient for a little longer! **from** community@ramsdenvillage.co.uk

Staff from Charlbury Medical Practice have been working hard and vaccinations began on January 16th. They are working together as a Primary Care Network (PCN) with Burford, Bampton and Broadshires surgeries to co-ordinate and deliver the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine from Carterton Health Centre.

Remember, when you are called for your jab to wear loose fitting clothes. No Jumpers or tight shirts. For the latest news and advice please visit their website and, whenever possible, email the surgery rather than phone. Staff are using the telephone lines to make vaccination appointments. website: <https://www.thecharlburymedicalcentre.nhs.uk/contact1.aspx>

Leaffield Litter Pick-up Saturday 20 February 2021, 2-4pm.

Collect equipment and instructions from Vine Cottage driveway (North Green, adjacent to the Fox).

Help us keep Leaffield tidy with a national-lockdown, regulations-compliant litter pick-up along the main roads leading into the village. Bring your own gloves and high-vis, if you have them; otherwise, we will supply, along with pickers and bags. No booking necessary – just turn up. Wear masks and observe social distancing. Questions? Email Michael Triff at mbtriff@yahoo.co.uk.



Volunteers participate at their own risk and assume responsibility for their own health and safety.

Upgrading of Cotswold Railway line

The North Cotswold line is about to have a £199 m. upgrade. Most of us are familiar with the route as we have all used Charlbury station at some time or another. Ian Hudspeth, leader of Oxfordshire County Council, is hopeful the plans can be implemented within five years.

However there is some disagreement about how far the improvements should go. The main improvements will be to Hanborough station which will see a second platform and a park and ride centre plus dualling of the line between Hanborough and Wolvercote. Lib Dem Councillor Liz Leffman is concerned that the 10 mile stretch of line between Hanborough and Charlbury will remain single track under these proposals, which have been endorsed by Oxfordshire County Council and supported by our MP Robert Courts.

As she points out, "This means that while there will be four trains per hour from Hanborough to London, people using Charlbury and Kingham stations will only have one train per hour, and the smaller stations just one train per day. Dualling this short stretch of line would mean a far better rail service for everyone. If this stretch is left single track, we will see more cars on our roads, as people travel to Hanborough and Oxford Parkway, where they make use of the much more regular service."

If you would like to add your name to Liz's petition on this issue and try to get the whole of the Cotswold Line dualled you can do so by going to this website: <http://www.oxonlibdems.uk/cotswoldline>

Churches and Cathedrals Join the fight against Covid

At the time of writing (and how quickly everything changes these days!) three English Cathedrals have opened their buildings and become vaccination centres. In Salisbury's Gothic 13th century nave, live organ music is accompanying the vaccinations as the established Church steps up to answer the need for more spaces to safely administer vaccinations to the public. Patients aged 80 and above from three healthcare practices in the district were invited to the cathedral, chosen to act as a hub for the Sarum South Primary Care Network. "I'm just overjoyed that we can play our part in this," said the Very Rev'd Nicholas Papadopoulos, Dean of Salisbury.

Lichfield Cathedral which is being used in the same way was once a major pilgrimage site. Throughout the Middle Ages, thousands visited the burial site of St Chad of Mercia in search of the miraculous cures the saint was believed to perform. The Dean, the Very Rev'd Adrian Dorber, said, "We pray every day for our nation and community, especially for healing the sick and protecting the vulnerable. It's only right we offer the cathedral as a practical means for those prayers to be answered."

In Blackburn too, the cathedral has become Lancashire's first mass vaccination centre.

Pope Francis once said, "You pray for the hungry and then you feed them. That is how prayer works." In the fight against the pandemic he and the whole church might say "you pray for the sick and then you nurse them." Of course not everyone agrees with this 'hands on' approach and The Daily Telegraph recently ran an article entitled "Cathedrals should stick to what they do best: being houses of God." You can't please everyone but I know which attitude seems more Christ-like to me. *Ed*

Poppy Sales: An excellent result for Leaffield

Despite the difficult circumstances this year and no door to door collection, Leaffield Poppy Appeal raised over £650 and we are grateful to all those who gave.

The poppies on our Lychgate War memorial, which were put in place for Remembrance Day, glistened in the snow at the New Year and will now be left in place until the early spring. *Simon Bentley*



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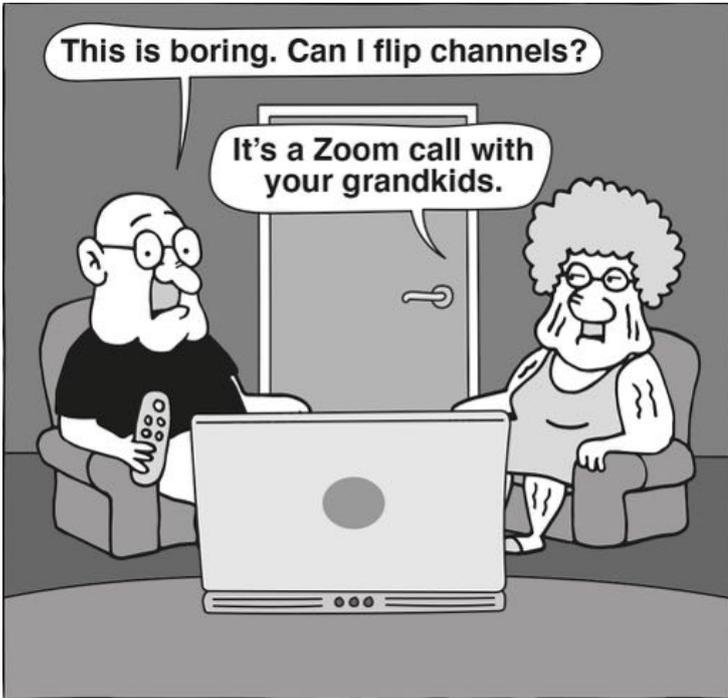
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Below, the scene inside Litchfield Cathedral





Road Closure near Finstock

Work is about to start on the bridge near Finstock Station. Cllr Liam Walker writes: "Network Rail are carrying out work on the bridge on the B4022 between Finstock and Charlbury by Finstock station. The road will be closed from 8th February - 22nd March.

Oxfordshire County Council's notice states, "Appropriate traffic signs will be displayed to indicate when the measures are in force.

Exemptions are included for emergency services and for the works and for access to premises which are only accessible from the closed section of road.

The alternative route for traffic is via B4022, Charlbury road, Woodstock Road, B4437, A44, A4095 (Grove Road), A4095 (Jubilee Way), A4022 (West End), Crawley Road, Hailey Road, Witney Road, Charlbury Road and vice versa."

Ramsden Zoom Quiz Nights.

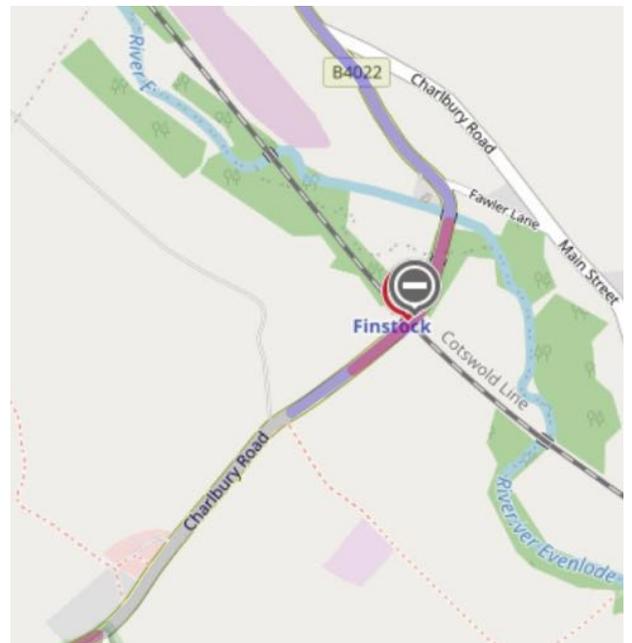
These are on the first Friday of every month - and while Covid-restrictions close the pubs, we're running bonus quizzes in the middle of the month. The next one is Friday 5 February.

Not quizzed with us before? It's easy to join (not promising about the questions!) - if you don't already get the links, reply to this email and I'll add you to the list. Then you just click on the link you get sent from 6.00 onwards on Quiz Day - Quiz starts at 6.30, but we have a natter first. The Quiz will finish no later than 7.30, and there's no naming and shaming of scores - only the top score(s) get announced! The winner each time sets the next Quiz, so we get a great variety of questions - Quiz Setter for 5 February is Peter Saugman.

And of course, on the last Friday of every month we have the Ramsden **200 Club** draw - with the 3rd prize only available to members who turn up (for now, by Zoom). If you would like to buy a 200 Club membership (or another one, to increase your wins!) reply to this email or talk to Roz Danks.

LOOK OUT FOR MORE NEWS IN FUTURE EMAILS AND THE VILLAGE NEWSLETTER.

If you'd like more information about anything in this email, just hit REPLY, or email community@ramsdenvillage.co.uk



Have you seen this man? He appeared recently in Jordan's Close Ramsden.

NEW EDITOR NEEDED

I shall be stepping down from my role as Editor this summer when I will have been doing the job for 10 years.

If you are interested in taking up the position please contact me or the vicar. I shall be happy to discuss the work involved.

John Hook

The Friends of Leaffield School Lottery

The Friends of Leaffield School have signed up to Your School Lottery with our first weekly draw taking place on **27th February 2021!**

This is open to anyone and everyone so to start supporting your village school and to buy your ticket please visit www.yourschoollottery.co.uk and search for Leaffield CE Primary School.

Tickets are just £1 each and each week there will be a cash prize for a Leaffield School supporter, plus a chance to win the £25,000 jackpot. With increasing restrictions continuing to limit our fundraising abilities this is a great opportunity for us all to continue to raise money to support our school.

For more information please visit www.yourschoollottery.co.uk, or email friendsofleaffieldschool@gmail.com.

Thank you for your support!

The Vicar writes



“Don’t let’s blow it now!”, the Health Secretary, Matt Hancock said recently. It is good advice. As the weeks roll on, under lockdown 3.0, it is all becoming ever more tedious. Tensions are running high and some are becoming quite angry. There is a dichotomy at the middle of it all - no one wants to catch this terrible virus, but we want to regain our freedoms. It is easy to convince ourselves the rules should apply to everyone else while we should be free to do as we wish.

A previous head of the FBI, James Comey, recently said that the former President of the United States, Donald Trump, behaved like a two-year-old toddler in his constant need for attention. After being sacked by Mr Trump, my guess is that they are never going to be the best of buddies. But Mr Comey makes a good point about human behaviour more generally. Most people need to think their lives matter, as our influence on others plays a significant part in how we perceive ourselves. For some people, they never mature above the antics of a two-year-old. They crave the attention of others and don’t really care if the consequences of their words and actions are positive or negative. All that matters is the attention.

Fortunately, most people are a little more mature. Even if we remain largely unaware of the attention we crave, we know enough to want our influence to be for the good. But during this pandemic, when we have been ordered in most cases to stay at home, there is little chance for socialising. Life can seem meaningless as our influence dwindles and some people end up grabbing any opportunity to assert themselves, whatever the cost to others.

It is often difficult to determine whether our words and actions will help or hinder other people. Sometimes, however hard we try, it doesn’t end up going well.

Forgiveness is such a vital part of the Christian faith. Although the cost was high, Christ offered himself completely and willingly on the cross so that we may know the forgiveness of God. The suffering of Jesus is meaningless if we believe God withholds his forgiveness. But that suffering is equally meaningless if we remain unrepentant. God cannot forgive the unrepentant sinner.

A maxim of the Buddhist faith is “do little harm”. As Christians, we may hope to achieve far more with our lives than “little harm”. Thomas Merton was an American Cistercian monk, writer, theologian, mystic, poet and social activist. He was particularly known for his pioneering work forming and strengthening dialogue with Eastern religious leaders and those associated with Buddhism. This was highly unusual at the time in the United States, particularly within religious orders. Within a shared commitment to contemplation, Merton found the desire for self-awareness, amongst Buddhist monks, echoed his own pursuit within his Trappist order.

The maxim “do little harm” can be compared with the Christian understanding of repentance in the face of sin. Both involve a realistic look at ourselves through quiet contemplation and prayer. Alister McGrath, at the beginning of this pandemic, asked us to consider how we might use this time of hardship to achieve something positive. Most people say they normally have little time for prayer and stillness. It is true, some people are incredibly busy because of this pandemic. Many others are experiencing boredom at being stuck at home. Perhaps we might consider Alister’s challenge once again as we journey together through the last of these winter months.

With every blessing

Paul

Rev’d Paul Mansell



**WITH ANOTHER LOCKDOWN
HAPPENING, PLEASE REMEMBER IF
YOU’RE STRUGGLING AND YOU FEEL
HOPELESS, YOU’RE NOT ALONE!!**

**Can these helplines get shared far and
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talk to during this uncertain time?**

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IN OUR FOUR PARISHES

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*“The doors of the house where the
disciples had met were locked”*

Ever-present God,
be with us in our isolation,
be close to us in our distancing,
be healing in our sickness,
be joy in our sadness,
be light in our darkness,
be wisdom in our confusion,
be all that is familiar when all is
unfamiliar,
that when the doors reopen
we may with the zeal of Pentecost
inhabit our communities
and speak of your goodness
to an emerging world.
For Jesus’ sake. Amen

A Prayer by Andrew Nunn, Dean of
Southwark

CROSSWORD CORNER

Congratulations to everyone who sent in solutions to last month's puzzle. The winner was Angela Findlater from Ramsden who will be getting her £15 book token very soon. Well done Angela!

The answers were: ACROSS 1. World Affairs. 8. Adieu 9. Boxing Day 11. Iliad 12. Laud 13. Noel 14. Friday 15. Leonardo 17. Cobblers 19. Polish 22. Iona 23. Oxfam 25. Need a fork 26. I like 27. Psychiatrist DOWN 1. Waikiki 2. Round Table 3. Dabble 4. Fixtures 5. Anne 6. Red door 7. Satisfaction 10. Yellow Hammer 13A Anno Dominini 16. Broccoli 18. Bangers 20. Inflict 21. Racket 24. Marc

Hope you enjoy this one! Answers to me asap but certainly by 20th February. *Ed*

The Old Vicarage, Wilcote Lane, Ramsden OX7 3BA or johnianrupert@hotmail.com

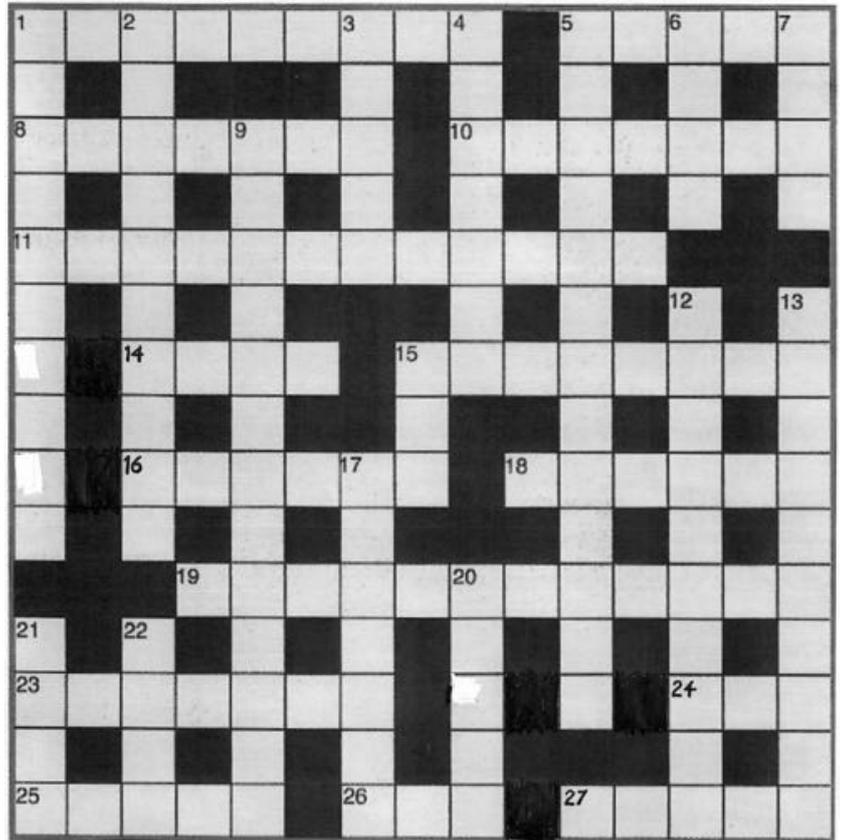
CLUES ACROSS

1. To go swimming in the nude (6.3.)
5. Mountain range in Western Russia (5.)
8. Cafe fed? You might get obliterated or rubbed out (7.)
10. Stop chorus (7.)
11. Mrs Danvers, Mrs Hughes and Mrs Doubtfire were all (12.)
14. As good as winks perhaps (4.)
15. Old Testament Prophet known for his lamentations (8.)
16. To do the first part is human and Dec's friend follows making us wayward. (6.)
18. Greek Island near Kefalonia once home to Odysseus (Greek spelling) (6.)
19. Famous London restaurant once owned by Marco Pierre White which closed in 2008. (3,9.)
23. Oscar Wilde thought it very important to be like this fellow (7.)
24. U.K. river asks a question (3.)
25. Relative, close to city on French Riviera (5.)
26. Dried grass or greeting (3.)
27. An official inspection of an organisation's accounts (5.)



CLUES DOWN

1. Who is this actor and TV host (7.3.)



2. Sometimes subtle and often from other people, these things can change our behaviour (10.)
3. Avoid city in Kansas (5.)
4. Snack or small meal might come from Melton Mowbray (7 or 4.3.)
5. Famous song by Natt King Cole which one should remember (13.)
6. Islands near Galway (4.)
7. "All My", play by Arthur Miller (4.)
9. Food you might 'gorge' on! (7.6.)
12. Not permitted, as in a football game (10.)
13. Who is this former World No 1 tennis player? (5.5.)
15. Engine invented by Frank Whittle (3.)
17. Electronic cigarettes cancelled sporting event. (2.5.)
20. Good friend to Toad of Toad Hall (5.)
21. Intend to be tight-fisted (4.)
22. Impulse found in our gentry (4.)



Who's idea was it to sing "Happy Birthday" while washing your hands? Now every time I go to the bathroom, my kids expect me to walk out with a cake!

Two fervent Trump supporters die and go to Heaven. Soon after their arrival they meet The Archangel Michael. "Please can you tell us," they ask, "did President Trump really win the presidential election or did he lose it because of fraud?" "I can definitely tell you that Joe Biden won the presidency fairly by 306 to 232 votes in the electoral college and there was absolutely no fraud," responds the Archangel. The Trump supporters look at him suspiciously before one turns to the other and whispers: "The conspiracy goes even higher than we thought."

