



# FRIENDS OF LITTLE GIDDING NEWSLETTER

**Summer 2020**



*Photo by Angie Mortlock*

Life continues to thrive at Little Gidding... Work has resumed on the St John's Church roof and the bell has been transferred to the foundry. Sue Capp and her team have been busy cleaning and sorting through Ferrar House and the out-buildings. All the while red kites look on as they swing through the sky and the sheep graze peacefully in the fields.



*Photo by Mark Holman*

What is life, so full of care  
We have to rush from here to there  
No time to pause, no chance to breathe  
I wish I had some annual leave!  
No time to watch our kids grow up  
Too busy washing bowls and cups  
No time to see, in broad daylight,  
The dreams that fill our minds at night  
No time to catch the tune and sing  
And wonder what tomorrow brings  
No time to kiss the mouth we love  
And say a prayer to God above  
Oh! What a life if full of care  
We have no time to stand and stare

Loosely based on **Leisure** by William Henry Davies,

by Angie Mortlock

## The Eliots' visits to Little Gidding

TS Eliot famously came to the "secluded chapel" on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May 1936. The encounter inspired his last great poem, completing *Four Quartets* six years later.

That morning Eliot conducted the viva voce examination of Bernard Blackstone's PhD thesis in Trinity College, Cambridge. Blackstone (1911-1983) later published *The Ferrar Papers* in 1938.



Valerie Eliot attended the first TS Eliot Festival on Saturday 20 May 2006. The photograph in Ferrar House shows Valerie Eliot with Malcolm Guite and Iman Javadi. The poet Ruth Padel and writer Karen Armstrong were also present.

The occasion was marked by a Radio 4 telephone interview with Malcolm Guite, conducted in a distant field to reach the signal.

Valerie Eliot wrote in the Ferrar House visitor book:  
*a wonderful weekend in honour of Tom*

20-21 May | Valerie Eliot London W8 a wonderful weekend in honour of Tom

## **Obituary: Richard Bunyan (1943-2020)**



Richard Bunyan was a good and faithful friend of Little Gidding, finding solace there in the latter years of his life. Richard moved to Buckden (Cambs), following retirement as Chaplain to Littlehey Prison. There, he served as assistant priest at St Mary's Parish Church and was one of a number of clergy who celebrated the Eucharist at St John's Little Gidding on the second Friday of the month.

His health deteriorated after knee-replacement surgery and severe bouts of acute anxiety. Richard moved to a residential care home in Eynesbury, nevertheless he continued to attend the monthly service at Little Gidding with the help of friends and the use of a wheelchair, until he became too frail.

Richard's funeral was held at Cambridge Crematorium on 18<sup>th</sup> May and the planned memorial service at St Mary's Buckden, in thanksgiving for his life, has had to be postponed. We remember him with affection and commend him to his Lord. May he rest in peace and rise in glory!

Richard Scott



## **Obituary: Ann Cornford**

Ann Cornford died at the end of May. She was a truly remarkable woman. She loved God, she loved people, she loved Little Gidding.

We first got to know her in the early 2000's. Tony was invited to Little Gidding, his first visit there since we left the area in 1981, to talk with a group of people who were meeting there. Their mission, at least at that time, was to visit Christian places which they felt had fallen on hard times and needed a lot of prayer and love. Somehow after that he retained links, mostly by phone, sometimes via her long, beautifully hand written letters, and I was fortunate enough to get to know her, at a distance at first.

In many ways she reminded me of Joan Hickson's portrayal of Miss Marple in the Agatha Christie stories. Of a 'certain age', the epitome of her age and class, she was a quiet, gentle woman, the backbone of her local church and community. But there was a great depth. Her faith was paramount to her; she was always loving, perceptive, gentle, never critical, but quick to support, and pray, always grateful when one made contact with her, always interested in each of us as individuals, as a family and as part of Little Gidding. She never forgot an anniversary or other important occasion, always sending an appropriate, beautiful hand written card or letter.

Once we had moved back to Little Gidding we saw her there and so much enjoyed those times. She never had a computer, so most of our conversations were by lovely, long phone calls or by letter. She never seemed to be in a hurry; whenever one rang she always said it was convenient, and seemed happy to receive and absorb whatever I or we wanted to unload on to her.

I trusted her implicitly, and benefited greatly from her love and wisdom. In a way she was a sort of long distance spiritual director for me. I had two lovely long conversations with her in the month before she died. She was unwell following a fall, but she was her usual cheerful, stoic and positive self, ever grateful for what her friends and carers were doing for her. I shall not forget her.

Judith Hodgson



*Photo by Mark Holman*

## The Ferrar Papers: (Ed. B. Blackstone)

Susanna Collett to her brother Nicholas Ferrar: 24 April 1626

my most deare brother  
the great mercies that god hath shewed vnto vs in the hope  
of your perfect recovery from so dangerous a sicknes and  
the preserving of our dearest mother together with others  
of our best friends in health, is so great a joye vnto vs  
that I cannot yase it over in silence but must needs  
expresse it giving most humble thanks vnto god for this and  
all other his unspeakable favours beseeching him to continue  
this and all other his blessings vnto vs and make vs truly  
thankfull vnto him for them  
I wrote vnto my brother by fothermgam Carici which I hope hee  
will receive the cheifest matter was to let him know that a  
Certificat will not be had heer with his name in it vnlesse  
it be certified heer that this land is his I know you will  
guse at the reason as wee doe and consider of it to pay it thor  
and send your Certificat before it be called for heer for the  
things hee desires to know from hence I pray let him by this  
vnderstand of them. The trees do all but the hays grow  
but nothing comes up on the bank in the hoy yard the Cows  
will not eat a lock of hay now they haue tasted grasse  
there is left heere 24 sheepe 20 kames 6 wethers and 1 oym  
and this weeke my husband will send those that are at born  
which I think is about 14 and hee your yogeth on fridday  
to send ouer 10 Carts with timber from thence, heere  
was 2 men of hamerton that weare content to giue 20  
for kams Cose and pay all duties for on yotre the would  
haue had it richard had almost concluded with them  
but I perswaded him not to doo it because as yet you haue  
got no loer prise then 21 but hee doubts no man will  
giue so for the fusting money hee hath receiued all as hee saith  
but a matter of 30 hee will writ vnto you how hee hath  
laid out that which hee hath receiued and also what ground  
hee hath let thus my best loue remembred vnto your selfe  
my brother and sister I rest ever  
your most truli louing sister  
Susanna Collet

Little giding  
24 April

My most deare brother

the great mercies that god hath shewed vnto vs in the hope of your perfect recouery from so dangerous a sicknes and the preserving of our dearest mother together with other of our best frends in health, is so great a Ioye vnto vs that I cannot pase it ouer in silence but must neds exprese it giueing most humble thankes vnto god for this and all other his vnspeakable favours beseching him to continew this and all other his blesings vnto vs and make vs truly thankfull vnto him for them

I wrot vnto my brother by fotheringam Carier which I hope hee will receue the Chefest matter was to let him know that a Cirtificat will not be had hear with his name in it vnlese it be certified heare that this land is his I know you will gu[es]se at the reason as wee doe and consider of it to pay it [then] and send your Cirtificat before it be Caled for heare for the things hee desiers to know from henc I pray let him by this vnderstand of them, the yong treese do all bud the hops grow but nothing coms vp on the banck in the hop yard the Cowes will not eat a lock of hay now they haue tasted grase there is left heare 27 sheepe 20 Rames 6 wethers and 1 oyw [ewe] and this weeke my husband will send those that are at born which I think is about 14 and hee pourposeth on friday to send ouer 10 Carts with timber from thence, heare was 2 men of hamerton that weare content to giue 20 for Rams Close and pay all duties but for on[e] yeare the[y] would haue had it richard had almost conCluded with them but I perswaded him not to doe it because as yet you haue set no loer prise than 21 but hee doubts no man will giue so for the [losing] mony he receued all as he saith but a matter of 30s hee will writ vnto you how hee hath laid out that which hee hath receued and also what ground hee hath let thus my best loue remembered vnto your selfe my brother and sister I rest euer

your most truli loueing sister

SUSANNA COLLETT

Little giding  
24 Aprill [1626]



## **Dates for your diary:**

In the current circumstances all dates are provisional following Government advice. At the present time all Church services have been suspended. Ferrar House is closed, but this has given an opportunity for work on the flooring to remove damp.

A recorded service from Little Gidding is available from noon each Friday via links from the North Leightonstone Benefice website under YouTube videos; Friends of Little Gidding Facebook page; North Leightonstone Benefice Facebook Group or just click on this YouTube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWZUrcG9C0s&t=33s>

**Saturday 26 September:** In place of the deferred Pilgrimage and Quiet Day, an online presentation of prayer and poetry is planned. More details to follow via email and the Friends of Little Gidding Facebook page.

**Saturday 5 December: Nicholas Ferrar Day** and AGM of the Friends of Little Gidding.

Our **Annual Pilgrimage** from Leighton Bromswold to Little Gidding has been deferred until Saturday May 15<sup>th</sup> 2021.

For further information, please contact the Hospitality Manager, Mrs. Sue Capp, at Ferrar House, telephone:01832 293 383; email [info@ferrarhouse.co.uk](mailto:info@ferrarhouse.co.uk)

## Membership

A big thank-you to everyone who has renewed their subscriptions for 2020. May we encourage you to support the work of the Friends of Little Gidding by remaining a paid-up member: Individual: £20; Household: £30; Patron: £70.

A cheque made out to 'The Friends of Little Gidding' can be sent to Sally Seaman: 12 Bayswater Avenue Bristol BS6 7NS or for Standing Orders and online banking information to [membership@littlegidding.org.uk](mailto:membership@littlegidding.org.uk).

This Newsletter has been compiled by Susan Waters, who would be pleased to receive your stories about your experience of Little Gidding – what brought you there, your impressions of the place... Please email contributions and suggestions to [susanwaters144@gmail.com](mailto:susanwaters144@gmail.com) or by post to: NL Editor, FOLG, c/o Ferrar House, Little Gidding, Huntingdon PE28 5RJ.

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