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Latimer's Diary



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War memorial on show

THE church of St Thomas the Apostle on Fishponds Road closed in the late 1970s but not long afterwards became the New Testament Church of God.

The church still has a rather handsome memorial to "the men of Eastville who gave their lives" in the First World War in the form of two hand-carved, hand-painted panels. They were dedicated in 1921, and have recently had some conservation work carried out on them.

St Thomas the Apostle opened in the 1880s, though it was not completed until the early 1900s (in between the two panels commemorating the war dead is a memorial to Thomas Walter Bankes-Jones, the first Vicar of St Thomas, which looks to have been made at the same time).

All of this speaks to the way in which the neighbourhood was growing in the later 19th century, a large and mostly working-class suburb.

The church is holding an exhibition the weekend after next to showcase some of the stories behind the 100-plus names on the memorial, but also in the hope that people will come forward with information on some of the others.

Sharon Francis, a member of the New Testament Church of God congregation, has done much of the work behind this.

"The First World War memorial has always been a huge and imposing monument within the church. I had walked past it many times, but one day I stopped and really looked at it," she told BT.

Speaking to conservation experts made her realise that "I wasn't simply looking at a list of names on a wall. I was looking at a carefully designed and crafted memorial, created over a century ago to commemorate local people who had served and died during the First World War."

Sharon's journey continued, naturally enough, into researching the lives of some of these men. She found two of them had played for Bristol Rovers, and families who had lost more than one son.

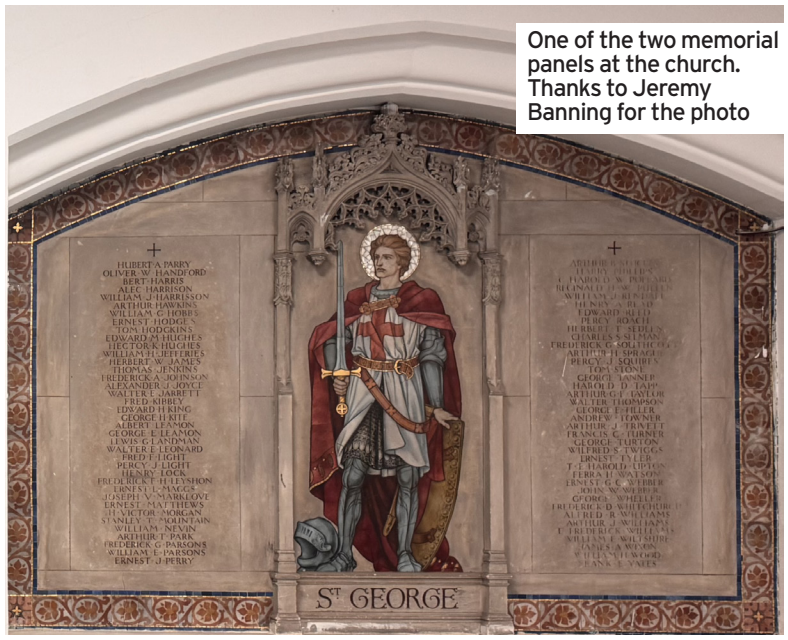
"Young men whose lives had barely begun – men who had families, ambitions and futures ahead of them, but who never came home.

"These individual stories also showed why the memorial still matters to the local community. The names remain here in the church, even if the wider community may have forgotten them. Many of these men lived locally and may have attended this church themselves, making the memorial a deeply personal part of the community's history."

Sharon is particularly interested in hearing from family members of: Henry Alexander (one of three brothers killed); Henry E. Box; Herbert W. Conybear; William Gerrish; Harry Phillips; Joseph Marklove.

The exhibition is on Friday 6 and Saturday 7 November at the New Testament Church of God, 141 Fishponds Road, Bristol BS5 6PR and is open from 11am to 3pm both days.

If you are unable to visit on those days, but think you may be able to provide information on the men named above, mail us at bristol.times@b-nm.co.uk and we'll pass your details on to Sharon.



One of the two memorial panels at the church. Thanks to Jeremy Banning for the photo

Knitting for men

Weird coincidences time … Mrs Latimer is currently recuperating from an illness and very bored. Even her prodigious appetites for reading books and equally voracious hunger for trashy daytime TV have been sated. She is immune to my argument that even playing computer games would be more life-affirming than watching property-porn on the telly. The jigsaw remains half-made.

In desperation I suggested she might want to knit something, to which she riposted "Why don't you knit something?"

I returned to my computer to find a press release from the very wonderful Cary Comes Home film festival about how Cary Grant learned to knit.

Cary Comes Home, which takes place every two years, is happening this year from November 27-29. Among the screenings will be *Mr Lucky*, a 1943 romance which picked up on the US wartime enthusiasm for knitting socks, scarves etc. for the troops serving overseas.

In it, we see Cary unselfconsciously knitting, challenging the gender stereotypes of the time. Apparently Cary had to learn how to knit specially for the film. Read more at *tinyurl.com/CaryKnits*

The festival screening of the film will be preceded by a "relaxed community knit-in", so bring your wool and needles.

For more on Cary Comes Home and to book tickets, see *https://www.carycomeshome.co.uk*

Untangling the Arthur legends

We've not seen the book, but an event coming up on November 4 will be of interest to anyone who's into King Arthur and all the legends around him.

Somerset-based author Amy Jeffs has recently published *Arthur: A New Life* which draws on some of the earliest medieval sources of the legend to try and build a more comprehensive picture.

One of the important aspects of the Arthur story, and one which most people probably don't realise, is that the earliest stories are not of the chivalrous chap and his round table of gentlemanly knights, but rather of a violent warlord, or even a bloke who's kidnapped by fairies.

Jeffs looks at these earlier tales, and among her sources are fragments of a manuscript from the 1200s which were found at Bristol Central Library some years ago.

She's in conversation with historian Helen Carr at the Loco Klub in Redcliffe on November 4. For booking and details, see *tinyurl.com/JeffsArthurBook*.

For details of the book from the publishers, see *tinyurl.com/4tj6uwsd*.



Cary learns to knit in *Mr Lucky*; bring your own knitting for the screening in Bristol next month

PARK CIRCUS/RKO PICTURES

AI slop of the week



MANY years ago, I took delivery of a large number of colour slides which had been given to Julian Lea-Jones, the moving spirit behind the brilliant Temple Local History Group back in the 1980s and 90s.

One particular set was in very poor condition. You could still make out what the pictures were of, but they were very scratchy and the slides had lost nearly all their original colours, now showing everything in assorted shades of purple.

These were colour photos of Bristol street scenes in the early 1960s and I was desperate to recover them, but no amount of messing around with image-editing software could do the trick.

Until now. I've stuck them all through Google Gemini and/or ChatGPT and the results have been close to perfect except for a few tiny details which you have to look right hard to see.

This, for instance, was taken in about 1962. The Rupert Street car park, which had opened in November 1960, was considered one of the wonders of the age. It was one of the first multi-storey car parks in the whole country. It was modern and exciting.

The picture has been recovered well, though one important detail is wrong. The computer brain decided that it needs a grey car – some or other model of Wolseley? It is not there in the original. There is nothing on that spot in the original.

But yeah, if you happen to have a load of faded colour transparencies, old family photos for instance, scanning them and putting them through AI will – almost! – recover them completely. Just don't say you weren't warned if it inserts a superfluous Hillman Imp or Ford Anglia.