

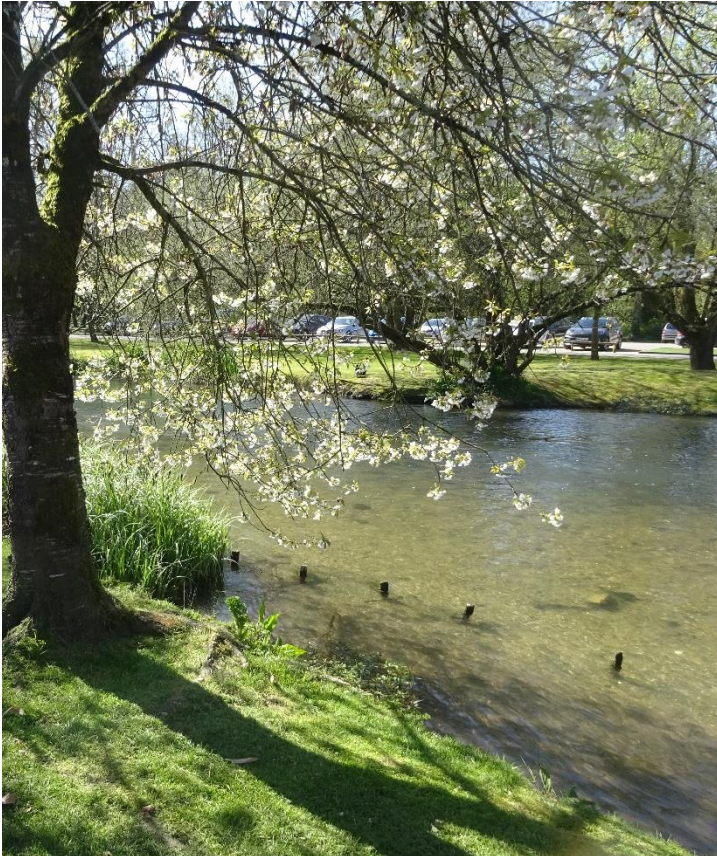
## Prayers in the Park

19<sup>th</sup> May 2021



***The park, looking across the river. This area was once the Great Marsh, then became a hop garden. The Wylde, the 'river with willows' gave its name to the town of Wilton (Wylde-ton).***

### A PRAYER FOR OUR RIVERS



We thank you, Lord, for the rivers of our country, especially the two which flow through our town of Wilton, the Nadder and the Wylde.

We praise you for their beauty and appreciate both the opportunities they provide for recreation and quiet contemplation, as well as the wealth of plant and animal life which they support. We are entertained by the ducks and enjoy the glimpse of a kingfisher or fish, but much of this life is unseen and yet essential to the complex web of interdependent organisms.

We give thanks that Wilton is protected from flooding, by the water meadows and flood defences, together with good management, and pray for those who live near rivers where flooding causes loss of property and sometimes even life.

Please help us to treasure the resource of clean water and not to take our easy access to it for granted. Where possible may we support schemes which help to give all people the precious gift of clean water.

Finally, we ask that you show us ways to conserve our rivers for the benefit of all, not only by our prayers but by our actions. In Jesus's name. Amen.

*Julia Williams*

## ***The Dragon's Teeth and Fountain***

***The 'teeth' either side of the bridge were made in WWII as a tank trap to protect the town from an expected enemy invasion.***

***The Wylde was dredged deeper to form a protective 'Stop Line' all along the valley which continued down the Avon to the coast.***

***The Home Guard guarded the bridge, the main entrance to our town.***



## **A PRAYER FOR PROTECTION**

We thank you, Lord, for safely bringing us together today think of those of our Mothers' Union branch who are still shielding or cannot join us for other reasons too.

We think of MU members worldwide, and especially in India, during this pandemic and pray that you will protect each one and keep them and their families safe.

We ask this in Jesus's name. Amen

*Pauline Mahony*

***The fountain was erected exactly 120 years ago by Lady Gertrude, Countess of Pembroke "in memory of happy days in Wilton. Trusting that it will be a comfort to all passers-by and thirsty animals." Originally at the foot of The Avenue, it was later moved to the park***

**HERE WE STOP TO MEDITATE ON OUR OWN MEMORIES OF "HAPPY DAYS IN WILTON"**



***The stone memorial seat marks when Lord Pembroke generously gave the people of Wilton this land to use as a park in 1910.***

***The rear of the seat is also carved to mark the visit by King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra to Wilton in 1908, passing this spot on their way to Wilton House with crowds of people by the roadside. During their visit the royal couple also worshipped in St Mary and St Nicholas Church.***

## A PRAYER FOR GENEROUS GIVING

Dear Father

Give us generous hearts Lord. We know that everything comes from you and to live in your love is to share and to give freely. We praise you and we thank you for our countless blessings. We pray for all those suffering and in need at home and abroad. This Christian Aid week, we pray for all those in need around the world - many in need of the basics of clean water, food and shelter. We pray for the Mothers' Union members working here in the UK and in countries where there is drought, hardship and oppression. Thank you for their generous hearts and the work they do to overcome inequality. We ask you to bless the Mothers' Union initiatives taking place throughout the world, not least the work with the United Nations.

We offer you these prayers in the name of your son, our saviour Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*Annie Hotton*



***Wilton Bowls Club was begun 40 years before the park and moved here in 1912 after the Bowling Green was laid out and the original clubhouse. Ladies only were allowed as members sixty years later! Since then, two of our ladies (both MU members!) Ann Hindley and Christine Stott – have been County Champions. Ann was also Lady County President***

### PRAYER FOR THE WILTON BOWLERS

Lord, we thank you for the people who had the Vision for the bowls club. We thank you for the opportunity it gives for recreation in these beautiful surroundings, for competition and for social interaction for all age groups.

In Jesus's name, Amen.

*Ann Hindley*

***As well as formal flower beds, the park now has a wildflower meadow area.***

***We are reminded, as Mothers' Union members, of the great benefits families may gain, physically and mentally, by access to parks and natural areas, especially for those living in homes without any garden of their own.***



## A PRAYER FOR THE PARKS OF WILTON

Lord, we thank you for the beauties of nature, especially as many of us have, over the past year during lockdown, come to appreciate it even more than before.

We give you thanks too for all who work in parks, gardens and in the countryside to make Wilton a beautiful place in which to live. Please bless the work of the groundskeepers here and also for the volunteers who are trying to create wildflower patches in our town, such as on the traffic roundabout and in Castle Meadow. Amen.

*Christine Matthews*



***The children's playground, adventure playground and tennis courts are the responsibility of the Wilton Town Council. Since last week we have five new and six re-elected members of that Council who will be looking after this park and the playground areas at Bulbridge, Wishford Road and Castle Meadows too, providing safe and enjoyable facilities for all ages, and especially here for young families.***



## A PRAYER OF THANKS FOR CHILDREN

Father God.

Thank you for these very special young lives.

They burst with hope and joy and fill our days with such delight.

Guide them and keep them each day.

May they know your loving hand upon their lives and come to know you as friend and Father.

Inspire their hearts as they grow and mature to be fully alive.

Protect their minds, watch over their hearts and lead them to great adventures. Amen

Let every child  
Laugh and play  
Love and smile  
Every day.

Amen

*Monica Gale*



***St Peter's church, Fugglestone, lies opposite the park gate. This was where the 17<sup>th</sup> century poet, George Herbert, was the parish priest.***

HERE THE GROUP JOINS IN SAYING  
GEORGE HERBERT'S FAMOUS POEM,

'THE ELIXIR'

Teach me, my God and King,  
In all things Thee to see,  
And what I do in anything  
To do it as for thee.

A man that looks on glass  
On it may stay his eye,  
Or if he pleaseth, through it pass  
And then the heav'n espy.

All may of Thee partake  
Nothing can be so mean  
Which with this tincture  
'for Thy sake'  
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause  
Makes drudgery divine.  
Who sweeps a room  
as for Thy laws  
Makes that and th' action fine.

This is the famous stone  
That turneth all to Gold,  
For that which God  
doth touch and own,  
Cannot for less be told.



***The Almshouses***

***Opposite the park are two sets of Almshouses. We can see that work has started to renovate and add extra accommodation to the Magdalene Almshouses.***

***They were built here 190 years ago by Catherine Woronsov, the Russian Countess of Pembroke, in memory of her late husband. Catherine's tomb is the large one in the choir of Wilton Church. But the Magdalene Almshouses started long before 1831 and were originally part of the medieval abbey, sited approximately in front of the main entrance gates to Wilton House.***

***When these buildings were rebuilt here, they homed servants who had retired from working for Lord Pembroke. This was before any state Old Age Pension was available. Other ex-servants could well have ended up in the local Workhouse, but the Herbert family made sure they could live out their days here. These almshouses recently were taken over by the Salisbury Almshouses for improvement.***

***Further on are the St Giles Almshouses, opposite the King Street entrance to the park.***



***The central stone has a Latin inscription to say the St Giles Hospital was begun by Queen Adelicia, the 2nd wife of Henry I. This was around 1135. The original site was just beyond the current Garden Centre.***

***The present almshouses were rebuilt here 170 years ago after the large wall built around the estate cut them off from the road.***

***St Giles is the Patron Saint of Lepers and the handicapped. St Giles's started as a leprosy hospital, then was used for plague and smallpox patients. These almshouses now may house anyone who is vulnerable through disability or illness, not just old age.***

***The present residents have worked together without any professional help to create a beautiful garden which has won the 'Wilton in Bloom' and the Almshouse Association Chairman's first ever Gardens Award was presented to Wilton United Charities who run it.***

#### A PRAYER FOR THE VULNERABLE

Standing by the almshouses, we pray for all who are old and lonely.

We remember especially those in care homes who have missed family and friends during this last year.

We also pray for young people in care who have missed their normal activities and have felt lonely and forgotten, and for the care givers who kept people safe and well.

We ask for God's blessing on all who are anxious. We are thankful that we can all enjoy seeing friends and family again, and visits to parks and gardens.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen

Rosemary Webb

***Through the back gate of the park, we reach the Old Courtyard of Wilton Carpet factory.***

***This year marks the 280<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first patent for Wilton Carpets in 1741 which were woven at first in the centre of town near Kingsbury Square.***

***The buildings here are over 200 years old, rebuilt after a fire destroyed what was then a textile mill making luxury fabrics. There is an old stone from one of these older building above the lower door with the date 1655.***



***Wilton sent its intricate hand-woven carpets all over the world. One, it is said, even went down in the 'Titanic'! Some were made to order and were so big they would nearly fill this courtyard!***



***Although the factory still weaves carpets, this area is now part of a new project called 'The Guild'.***

***Here there is a mix of factory made and artisan made items such as soaps, cheese and preserves, other handmade gifts and home-made cakes, on sale in the 'Herbs and Wild' Tepee where we end our walk.***



Lord, thank you for all those at The Guild who use their hands and skills to make the things we buy, from cakes and cuppas to chutneys, carpets and collectables.

We thank you that there are people in these shops who are keeping up the old traditions of producing quality goods that brought Wilton world-wide fame.

We pray that future plans for the old site will bring employment opportunities for the younger generation and prosperity to our town.  
AMEN

*Christine*