

St Bartholomew's Church, Otford Parish News



SERVICES AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

September	8.00am	10.00am	3.00pm	6.30pm
4th Sept	Holy Communion	All Together Worship	-	Evensong
11th Sept	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	-	-
18th Sept	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	-	Evensong
25th Sept	Holy Communion (BCP)	Holy Communion	Messy Church	-

SUNDAY CLUB (FOR AGES 0-14)

Crèche: 0-2 years Infant: 3-7 Junior: 8-11 Senior: 12-14

These groups meet in the Church Centre during the 10.00 am service, except on the first Sunday when in Church for All Together Worship. Crèche is available every Sunday.

First Steps for toddlers and their carers meets on alternate Wednesdays during term time. For more details please contact Najen Harris, 01959 522813.

EPIC (for school year 5-7) meets on the 2nd Saturday in the month, 6-8pm in the Church Centre.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S FELLOWSHIP meet every Sunday evening during term time in the Church Centre, 6.30 - 8.00 pm.

HOLY COMMUNION Every Wednesday 10.00 am (Book of Common Prayer)

If you would like to book a baptism or wedding, please contact the Church Office 01959 523185.

Cover photograph taken at the wedding of Adam and Lida

Magazine printed by Silver Pines Services (see page 37)

Magazine No. 09 Volume 86

READER'S REFLECTION

Summer time is often a time for journeys – going on holiday, visiting friends and family, the Olympians journeying to Rio. The children and young people on our weekend away in July followed the journeys Paul made as he travelled far and wide to take the good news of Jesus to many. We can also describe life as a journey. Sometimes it is smooth-running, flat and straight: we know where we are, what we are doing. We are on track and everything is going well. Sometimes life can be exciting, one of those journeys when we are excited about where we are going, or the route itself – perhaps the views on either side or even the road. However, sometimes the journey can be lonely, or difficult, an uphill struggle when we cannot see the top of the hill and wonder if we will ever get there.

In the Middle Ages, pilgrimages were the “holidays” of the time. We have been privileged to welcome pilgrims on their way to Canterbury, sometimes to spend the night at the church. With pilgrimages it is not just the destination but the journey itself which is important. And the same can be said for life – it is what I learn along the way, both good and difficult, that adds to my life's experience and helps me learn, mature and each day adds to the person I am, the person God created me to be. However, in our very busy Western, modern lifestyle, we seem too often to be working towards the next big thing, so that we do not truly appreciate what we are experiencing now.

There are many stories of journeys in the Bible which also mirror these ideas. We can think of the Israelites making their way back to the Promised Land but their 40-year journey was very important: a time to learn to be the people

of God again, to understand God's purpose for them as a nation. Elijah spent much of his life journeying (usually running from danger) but he found that there are times when we need to stop and spend time with God – it was when he stopped that he heard the still, small voice which then gave him the reassurance to continue. Jesus himself spent much of his three years of ministry on the road but he, too, made sure he had those moments to stop, to recharge the batteries.

So, as we come to the end of the summer holiday period, let us remember that on this life journey we do need times to stop, appreciate what we are doing today, think about how it will enrich our life, to spend time with God, to be mindful that he is always with us on this life journey and to learn not to rush all the time. God says, “Be still and know that I am God”.



Mags Southgate, Reader





DIARY FOR SEPTEMBER 2016

**Morning Prayer will be said in Church on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week
at 9.00 am and on Fridays in the Cranmer Room at 9.00 am**

- 2 2.30 pm Wedding of Nicholas Osborne and Cassandra Thornborrow
3 9.00 am Churchyard Working Party
- 4 The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity**
 8.00 am Holy Communion
 10.00 am All Together Worship
 6.30 pm Evensong
- 5 7.45 pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)
7 9.30 am 'First Steps' (Otford Evangelical Free Church, Pilgrims Way West)
 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
- 10 10 am-6.00 pm Friends of Kent Churches Sponsored Ride and Stride
 1.00 pm Wedding of Jason Tilbrook and Charlotte Chandler
 3.30 pm Wedding Blessing of Daniel Payne and Emily Bent
 6.00 pm EPIC (Church Centre)

**Magazine material for the October edition by today, please to the
Church Office, st.bartholomews@otford.net**

- 11 The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity**
 8.00 am Holy Communion
 10.00 am Holy Communion
- 12 7.45 pm Discussion (70 High Street)
14 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
17 2.00 pm Wedding of Edwin Thompson and Brenda Hambrook
 4.00 pm Wedding of Matthew Keys and Kirsty Walker
- 18 The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity**
 8.00 am Holy Communion
 10.00 am Morning Worship
 12 noon Baptism of George Benckert and Klara Benckert (Rev. Chris Reed)
 6.30 pm Evensong
- 19 7.45 pm Discussion (16 Tudor Drive)
21 9.30 am 'First Steps' (Otford Methodist Church Hall)
 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
 8.00 pm PCC meeting (Church Centre)
- 25 The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity**
 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
 10.00 am Holy Communion
 3.00 pm Messy Church (Church Centre)
- 26 7.45 pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)
28 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
4

ANCIENT WISDOM - MODERN LIVES

Peter is released from prison

Acts 12:1-16

We might have found ourselves in a spot of bother, in a bit of a fix, maybe a situation we feel we can't get out of. A time when we really need some help to get us out of the sticky situation. However, I doubt any of us have found ourselves in the difficult position Peter ended up in. I'll let him tell the story . . .

"After Jesus had returned to heaven, we, his followers, realised it was now up to us to spread the good news about him. However, King Herod was arresting and persecuting many of the new Christians and he was after me, especially as he knew I was doing my best to tell people about Jesus. Strangely this happened at the Passover festival, exactly a year after Jesus had been arrested.

So I found myself in prison – not a nice place at all, but I knew my friends at the church were always praying for me. I wasn't sure what good it would do and never expected what did actually happen!

It was night time and I was sleeping between two soldiers, in chains, sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel appeared and nudged me to wake me up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off my wrists.

The angel told me to get dressed, wrap my cloak around me and to follow him out of the prison. I thought I was dreaming! We passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city and it opened for us by itself. When I found myself on the street, suddenly the angel disappeared.

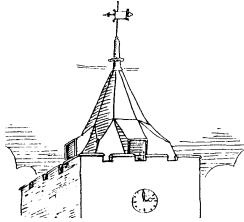
I made my way carefully, trying to keep out of sight, to the house of my friend, Mary the mother of John Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. When I arrived, I knocked at the outer entrance. Rhoda came to answer the door but when she recognized my voice, she was so excited that, instead of opening up for me, she ran back inside to tell the others, 'Peter is at the door!' They thought she was mad but when she kept insisting that it was me, they said, 'It must be his angel.' I kept on knocking until at last they opened the door and let me in."

When we pray, what sort of things do we pray for? What do we really expect to happen? Would we ever think that anything so dramatic might happen? And yet many Christians have similar stories to tell even today. Maybe we need to expect our amazing God to actually answer our prayers when we pray!

Mags Southgate, Reader



FROM ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH



'FIRST STEPS'

This lively group for babies, toddlers and their carers is always pleased to welcome new members. It is run by the Methodists and our own Church and includes the opportunity for a chat, refreshment and also a short Bible story, with singing and activities for the children, including games and crafts. It meets temporarily at Otford Evangelical Free Church and the next two meetings will be held on Wednesdays 7th and 21st September from 9.30 -11.30 am.

CHURCHYARD WORKING PARTY

Saturday, 3rd September

Anyone able to support the regular team will be most welcome from 9.00 am together with any useful tools - and even skills!

BRING AND SHARE LUNCH

Sunday, 4th September at 12.30 pm, Church

Centre. A Bring and Share lunch is being organised to welcome Richard back from his Sabbatical. Please sign the form at the back of the church if you would like to come. If your surname starts with the letters A-K please bring something savoury, and L-Z a dessert.

THE FRIENDS OF KENT CHURCHES BIKE & HIKE

Saturday 10th September

This will be held between 10.00am and 6.00 pm. Potential sponsors will be most welcome. We are looking for a rota of people to welcome visiting cyclists and walkers to sign them in. If you can spare an hour or two, please contact the Church Office on 01959 523185. The

money we raise is divided between Friends of Kent Churches and our parish.

ROCHESTER DIOCESE POVERTY AND HOPE

APPEAL 2016 - Sunday, 25th September. See page 7 for further details.

MESSY CHURCH

Sunday, 25th September, 3.00 pm

The next Messy Church event will take place on Sunday, 25th September at 3.00 pm in the Church Centre. This is suitable for families with children up to the age of 11. Do come along for some messy fun!

HARVEST SERVICES. These will be held on Sunday, 2nd October. This year we are again supporting the Diocese of Rochester's Poverty and Hope Appeal with financial gifts. Leaflets and gift aid envelopes are available at the back of church. We will also be supporting the Sevenoaks Food Bank (Loaves and Fishes) and St. Saviour's Priory in East London with gifts of food.

PARISH PUBLICATIONS UPDATE

A new leaflet to guide our many visitors to St Bartholomew's can now be found on the table by the new door. The aim is to provide brief information about the various things to be seen both inside and outside the building. The extension, built since the previous leaflet was published, is included in it. In the event of any reordering the leaflet will be revised.

A longer, illustrated guide to the church is in preparation. Another volume covering the organists and music of St Bart's is also on the way.

The authors would be pleased to have any extra information which may be relevant to either publication and a note of any errors in the current leaflet. Please pass these, in writing, through the church office.

MISSION MATTERS...

Poverty & Hope Appeal

As part of the Diocese of Rochester, St Bart's Church pays an annual amount to the diocese. A proportion of this goes towards mission and this particular project. This is in addition to the ten projects our church supports through our own mission links.

The Diocese Poverty and Hope Appeal channels Christian concern in our Diocese about justice for the poor and food for the hungry towards our commitment to tackle the causes and effects of poverty in different parts of the world. The Appeal was established some 30 years ago in response to the Bishops' challenge to churches to give 1% of their income to relieve poverty. It raises funds to help eradicate poverty by supporting national and international projects that focus on core issues that lie at the heart of poverty – agriculture, education, empowerment of disadvantaged people and communities, and healthcare. It also seeks to foster education in the Diocese, working with schools on issues of global citizenship and encouraging churches, schools and communities to learn more about the causes of poverty and how it can be tackled around the world.

Projects are usually supported for three years, to help them grow and become self-sustaining. They are funded through partner charities with whom we work to identify suitable opportunities, and which provide checks that the funds are properly applied. We are currently working with Christian Aid, CMS, Us (USPG) and Commonwork. A sum of £33,000 was distributed from the 2014 Appeal, and it is hoped to distribute a similar amount from the 2015 total.

Poverty & Hope Appeal – 2016

This year the appeal is supporting six projects. They are summarised in the 2016 brochure, and explained in more depth in the detailed projects information note – follow the links on the web page. The projects are:

KENT: exploring with young people global crisis issues linked with poverty, injustice and climate change, working through Commonwork, an educational charity. Receives long-term support.

ARGENTINA: supporting marginalised people and protecting the land on which they live and depend. Supported since 2015.

BURKINA FASO: improving food security in the face of increasingly unpredictable weather. Supported since 2015.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC): helping members of marginalised communities understand their rights and work with local authorities to secure resources and assistance. Newly supported this year.

INDIA: empowering vulnerable women through community councils. Supported since 2015.

TANZANIA: providing vocational training through the Chemba Vocational centre.

Please visit www.rochester.anglican.org
Debbie Cooper,
Appeal Coordinator,
Poverty and Hope
6 Calverley Park,
Tunbridge Wells,
Kent TN1 2SH

Tel: 01892-527611

Email: povertyandhope@gmail.com



DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS

Telephone: 01732 227000 www.sevenoaks.gov.uk

Cllr.Lowe@sevenoaks.gov.uk <http://michellelowe.yourcllr.com>

As you may know, Sevenoaks District Council is currently undergoing the process of updating our local plan - a series of key planning policies that will be used to decide planning applications – and to identify a new local housing target up to 2035.

Having an up-to-date local plan in place protects the District from unwanted and unsuitable development. Districts without local plans are finding they are losing every planning application at appeal – and unstoppable development is happening all over the place. Sevenoaks does have a local plan but it needs updating – so we need this done sooner rather than later to keep us protected.

As part of the process we have had to issue a call for sites; it is a government requirement for all councils to identify new land for development. Last year the Council asked local landowners to volunteer land and 252 sites were put forward. The majority of these are in the Green Belt as most of the seven percent of the District not in the Green Belt has already been developed.

Just because land has been put forward does not mean it will be developed. The next step in the process is for our planners to carry out a detailed investigation of each site and then recommend a shorter list of sites with the potential to be developed. These sites will be considered by councillors and you will be asked for your views next year.

As you know there is a shortage of homes in this country which is why house prices are so high. In the Sevenoaks District house prices are up to seventeen times higher than average wages preventing local people from being able to afford to live here – causing a range of social

issues. The Government has told us we have a duty to identify land for new homes as well as land for employment and local facilities.

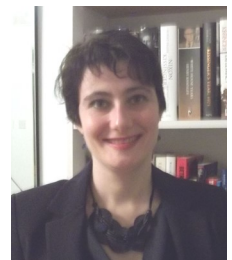
The SDC Cabinet member for Planning, Cllr Robert Piper, says: "The truth is we have exhausted nearly every site in the built up areas so it is inevitable that, in the coming years, there will be some new development in the Green Belt. But we are committed to ensure only the most suitable and sustainable sites are developed, for example previously built on land, sites that are concreted over, poor quality land or Green Belt land that no longer serves its original purpose."

You can view the sites at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/callforsites and can comment on the accuracy of the information presented by e-mailing sites@sevenoaks.gov.uk. The Council will fully investigate the sites recommended for development in 2017, after which there will be a public examination by the Government's Planning Inspector in 2018, before being formally agreed in 2019.

John Edwards-Winsor and I are fully involved in this process – please let us know your views and concerns so that we can do all we can to ensure that any new development in Otford is to the benefit of our community.

With best wishes,

Michelle



LYRICS AND LIVES: HYMN WRITERS ACROSS THE CENTURIES

Graham Kendrick

Graham Kendrick has been described as a 'father of modern worship music' whose songs are 'crammed full of poetic, divine, biblical truth' that have 'sculpted a view of God that has impacted generations'. For some he is the Charles Wesley of recent generations. For more than 30 years he has been at the forefront of Christian music in the UK having written and recorded hundreds of hymns and songs, many of which are well known around the world, including Shine Jesus Shine, Knowing You, The Servant King and Amazing Love. He is also an active advocate for the charity Compassion International, encouraging audiences worldwide to understand worship as a way of life, and true intimacy with God as sharing in the concerns of His heart and participating in His mission to the world. Compassion operates in over 24 nations and facilitates the support of over a million children.

Graham Kendrick was born in 1950, the son of a Baptist minister in Blisworth, Northamptonshire. He began his Christian ministry in London, serving with Youth with a Mission. When Kendrick joined the Ichthus Fellowship, South London, he started exploring a kind of church music that was meant to get people not only out of their pews but also out into the streets. Roger Scantlebury encouraged some of us in St Bart's YPF to go to their monthly Saturday services in the late 80's. By this time many of Kendrick's hymns and songs were being sung throughout Britain.

Kendrick began the phenomenon known as 'March for Jesus'. For the first Global March on 25th June, 1994, about ten million Christians sang through the streets of the cities around

the whole world.

Through these marches, Christians had begun to move beyond the confines of their 'comfortable churches' to proclaim Jesus as Lord to the public. Some of us remember taking part in a march in



Sevenoaks alongside Christians from all the churches in the Sevenoaks area. Kendrick says, "When churches unite, repent, witness, and evangelize through their city, and pray for the kingdom of God to come and for his will to be done—if that doesn't have any effect on the kingdom of darkness, then what does?"

Some of us had also witnessed Kendrick leading worship at conferences such as Spring Harvest, evangelistic rallies alongside the likes of Luiz Palau and Billy Graham, and Clive and I were at the Baptist World Youth Conference in Glasgow in 1988 when he released Shine Jesus Shine.

All of his hymns and songs are full of theology, words taken from the Bible, for every style and part of worship from praise and thanksgiving to God, to repentance, prayer and encouragement to go out and spread the good news of Jesus as Saviour.

Kendrick is now a 'local boy', living in Tunbridge Wells and worshipping at St John's Church, Southborough.

Mags Southgate

Thanks to the Graham Kendrick website for some of the information.

FAITH IN THE FAMILY...

September: New beginnings

Pause for thought: Take time to read the story about Peter being set free from prison, on p.5. Although we may not find ourselves literally behind bars, we can often feel imprisoned by our own negative thoughts, worries and behaviour. Anxieties are often at their worst first thing in the morning when we are awoken (not by an angel, as in the story!) but by the radio alarm, early morning traffic or even the worries themselves. These may involve the children in our lives (how ever old they are!) leaving us feeling frustrated, sad, helpless – and yet there *is* something powerful we can do for them. Pray. We can do so earnestly in the expectation of guidance, regularly to show we mean business, and specifically with the needs of each individual in mind.

Can you think of anyone who prayed for you as a child or as a young Christian, although you may not have realised it at the time? Perhaps, rather like the angel in the story, he or she gave you a nudge in the right direction and unlocked the door to the Christian faith for you.

Can you also think of a time when you were in a difficult situation and God answered your prayer asking for help? Imagine how this story might help a child you know and how you might tell it.

September brings with it various fresh starts for families – a new school year, children going away to college for the first time - new stages of life. Think what sort of things might be worrying our young people. Lets renew our efforts to pray boldly for the children we know and love, sure in the knowledge that God will help them over each hurdle. Who knows,

perhaps they would be willing to pray for us too!

Peter is set free: Tell the story from p.5 and read it together in Acts 12:1-16. Emphasize all the ways in which Peter was guarded and restricted, perhaps with the help of a padlock on a chain as a visual aid. Wonder about the story, as follows:



I wonder what part of the story you liked the best . . .

I wonder what the most important part of the story is . . .

I wonder why Peter's friends didn't believe that he was at the door . . .

I wonder if Peter knew his church was praying regularly for him when he was in jail . . .

Puzzle it out!



Look out any metal puzzles you may have that need to be disentangled methodically, following a certain sequence.

Or, provide a combination lock to open, for example on a briefcase, giving some clues as to the code. Another idea would be to ask for help in disentangling a necklace or cord on a toy.

How does everyone feel as they attempt to solve these 'puzzles'? What about when they succeed? How must Peter have felt in the story before and after his release? What constructive things do family members think they would like to do in life, and what is holding them back?

Conversation starter - a sticky situation!

Have fun getting in a real mess mixing pastry together by hand, stirring sticky toffee pudding or another gooey mixture, or doing some gluing. Older children may be using sticky tape to cover new textbooks or packing those sticky notes in their bags. Explain what we mean in life by 'a sticky situation'. You could tell the story you may have thought of earlier, explaining the difficulty you were in, how you asked God for help and what happened. Has anyone prayed and they did not get the answer they expected? Why do they think that was?

Praying boldly

'I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, "Move from here to there" and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.' Matthew 17:20.



The Bible tells us that faith can move mountains! As you are out walking or driving through Otford, point out The Mount – the nearest we have to a mountain! Cut out a big triangle (or mountain shape) and display it on a convenient surface, leaving a felt-tip pen nearby. During September, ask everyone to think of really bold one-sentence prayers for the world, including different countries, leaders, our own village and church, our families and friends. When they are happy with their prayer, they write or draw it on the mountain. Perhaps you could spend some time each Sunday looking at the prayers that have appeared and praying them together.

Obstacle course

Primary school children might enjoy making an obstacle course for a group of friends in the garden, or a series of jumps to tackle on a

hobby-horse. You could make a simple one for them. If they say it looks easy, surprise them by asking them to do it with a blindfold on! Then say that they can choose a friend to guide them. Would that make a difference? Link this with the idea that God is always with us, helping us with all the new things we are facing.

Prayer pact!

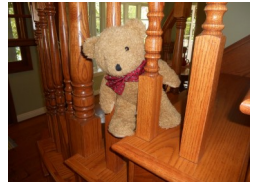
As everyone looks ahead to a new school/college year, chat about the things that might be on their minds (big exams this year, making new friends, a long journey to school/work, the pressure to look good, an empty nest . . .)

Agree to pray specifically for each other (for example, "I know, I'll pray that you'll have the courage to be friendly to lots of new people at school if you'll pray for me to not worry so much about what I look like, etc).

Bedtime story

You could make up a story about Teddy playing hide and seek.

He hides behind a chair while Big Ted counts to ten. "One, two three, etc, ready or not . . ." He looks here and there and at last finds Teddy. Then he hides under the stairs etc, next inside a cardboard box, etc. Then he climbs into a wardrobe and shuts the door. Big Ted can't find him anywhere. Teddy tries to open the door. But it's stuck. He starts to cry. Big Ted hears him. 'Don't worry, Teddy, I can hear you and I am right here, etc.' Teddy calms down and follows instructions to push the door. It opens and he falls into Big Ted's arms for a great big Bear Hug!



Vicki Howie

IN CONVERSATION WITH...PAT DOWNING MBE

In recent years Pat has received many awards for her charitable work; in 2006 she was awarded an MBE for services to the Kent Ambulance Service, in March 2016, at the Kent Charity Awards, she was given the Trustee of the Year award (for work with West Kent Mind) and this summer, she was presented with Sevenoaks District Council's Lifetime Achievement award (also for work with West Kent Mind). In interviewing Pat I was keen to discover what had led to her being honoured in this way and what had been the inspiration behind her dedication to voluntary work.

Pat has worked in the voluntary field most of her adult life. She told me that the initial impetus was a pastoral letter written jointly by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, read out in churches in October 1975. This letter (a copy of which Pat still has) was a personal appeal from the two archbishops to congregations to help bring about a spiritual renewal in the country by reflecting on 'what sort of society do we want'. The archbishops' encouragement was 'to live out the faith we profess' and to work 'to influence society in a positive and helpful way'. For Pat these were inspirational words; she had two school-age

children, no interest in attending coffee mornings, and a will to work hard to make positive changes within her local community. The idea of living out her faith by example is one she has adhered to all her life.

At the time of the letter Pat and her husband Peter were living in Weald and, together with a group of women from the church, Pat started the Beechmont Clubs, named after the hall where they met in Gracious Lane, Sevenoaks. The initial purpose of the Clubs was to support those with physical disabilities (both young and old) but they soon expanded to include the mentally ill. Volunteers collected the participants by car and provided lunch which was then followed by an afternoon of social activities and games. The Clubs continued for twenty-seven years before being largely superseded by Age Concern lunch clubs. The first of the photographs of Pat also shows Lord Coggan (one of the two archbishops who signed the 1975 letter) on the occasion of a service held at Kippington Church to celebrate twenty-five years of the Clubs.

In 1979 Pat was asked to take over voluntary mental health services in Sevenoaks. She was



told there would be 'nothing to it – just four meetings a year and one coffee morning'. However Pat quickly saw that so much more could be done in the way of housing, shelter and work schemes. Supported by a local psychiatrist, Dick Simons, Pat set about buying a house in Vine Avenue. She had no experience of property transactions but, all through the difficult process of raising funds and obtaining change of use permission for the building, felt strongly that she was being led and equipped by God. In time Pat was able to purchase another house for supported living (in The Drive), opened a day centre on St John's Road and started a sheltered work scheme where the St John's Hill surgery is now located. Today sixteen residents are accommodated in Sevenoaks and huge advances have been made in attitudes to mental health.

In the early days Pat had to provide much of the evening, night and weekend care herself. Nowadays the organisation has some thirty staff and seventy volunteers. Eight years ago, Pat stepped down as Chairman of what became known as West Kent Mind to become its President and has now provided the organisation with thirty-seven years of service. She told me that her current area of particular concern is the impact that drugs and legal highs are having on the minds of young people.

Alongside her work at West Kent Mind, in 1991 Pat became an independent Mental Health Act Manager. This gives her responsibilities for monitoring and supporting people who have been sectioned to ensure they are properly held. Pat still sits regularly on Mental Health Tribunals.

In 1996 Pat was appointed vice-chairman of the Kent Ambulance Service. She made it her role to travel around investigating staff needs; this

included going out with the staff on twelve hour shifts once every three months. Together with the chairman, one of her achievements was to set up the first chaplaincy service for ambulance workers – a service that later expanded nationwide.

Throughout all this dedicated volunteering, Pat's family life has been supremely important to her. Peter told me recently that she has been 'a superb wife' for over fifty-five years. The Downings have two children, Julia and Andrew, and are proud grandparents to three boys the eldest of whom has just got a first in Maths from Brasenose College, Oxford. His ambition is to become an actuary just like his grandfather, Peter. Their daughter Julia, a professor and expert in palliative care, who is well known to many in the church, was recently awarded an Honorary Fellowship from the University of Cardiff. Pat also has a twin sister living in Sevenoaks. For the entire family, faith lies at the core of who they are and how they relate to the world. The Archbishops' letter continues to resonate...

Christeen Malan



YOUTH WEEKEND AT KENCH HILL

We had a new venue for our annual youth weekend this year. Kench Hill, near Tenterden, provided all the accommodation we could possibly want with extensive outside space and also the added bonus of an industrial dishwasher to make the post meal chores much quicker.

Over 35 children plus some of our young adults (and a few not so young adults) spent the weekend looking at some of St Paul's life events

which helped us concentrate on friendships, difficulties we may encounter and standing up for our faith. Some of the activities involved tent making, being put in stocks, being ship-wrecked. We somehow managed to fit in playing wide-games and a trip to the beach!

We asked the youngsters to tell us what they thought of the weekend and here are some of the answers we got...



The camp was outstanding so I'll maybe go next year!

I liked making tents like Paul!

The camp was amazing and we learnt about Paul. I want to come next time. The food was yummy!

I liked everything!



The weekend was extraordinary and so much fun!

I enjoyed going to the beach, jumping off the sand dunes. I paddled, did cartwheels and buried Luke in the sand!



The best bit was going to Camber Sands and the barbeque after!

At Camber Sands lots of seagulls were 'sneakily' stealing our fruit, so Mags came to the rescue and transformed into The Seagull Scarer and chased them all away heroically!

Special thanks should go to all those who willingly gave up their time to lead and help at the weekend. To Dawn, Mags, Russell and Claire for leading the weekend; to Janet and her helpers who worked tirelessly in the kitchen to provide excellent food; to our young adults Tom, Naomi, Richard, Ben,

Becca, Seb, Alex, Danny who led sessions, entertained the children and most importantly were superb role models.

Also we would like to thank St Michael's School and Bessels Green Baptist Church for allowing us to use their mini buses for the weekend.

FROM OTFORD TO GREENLAND AND BACK

When Simon Featherstone set out on his sponsored walk, he little imagined the challenges he would encounter...

Since moving to Otford seven years ago, with my partner Rebecca having been welcomed into the Church choir, we have frequently noticed the extent to which Otford has retained a strong community feeling, despite modern trends. As a boy, my grandfather, Rector of St Edmund's on the Isle of Wight for over 30 years, had many wise words for me on the importance of community spirit, involvement and supporting charities.

In April, I had the opportunity to join a 17 day long expedition to East Greenland and chose to

raise money for multiple sclerosis research, having lost my brother at the age of 26 to this cruel disease. Our team of six ski mountaineers (including an experienced guide) aimed to haul sledges between camps in the remote glacier systems of East Greenland, climbing unnamed mountain peaks in one of the last great wildernesses on earth.

We flew via Iceland to a small airstrip on the East Coast of Greenland, continuing on foot to the nearest village, planning to pick up cooking fuel and a rifle to guard against polar bears. The next phase of the journey (scheduled to take half a day) became an epic experience involving five hours on dog sleds over the frozen sea with Inuit hunters and a further two days hauling small boats through pack ice to reach our starting point at a remote village – a journey originally scheduled to take six hours!





The scale of Greenland is almost unimaginable and the views from the mountain peaks that we climbed were simply breathtaking. The beguiling beauty of the Arctic masks a multitude of dangers ranging from the dramatic, in the form of avalanches, crevasses and polar bears, to the seemingly simple in the form of blisters, frostbite, sunburn, minor injuries or even wet feet. Our guide frequently reminded us that in a remote and harsh environment small problems can very quickly become serious or life threatening.

Despite five months of physical training, hauling a sledge full of food, camping gear, safety equipment and everything needed to sustain life in this harsh environment was still a considerable challenge. It was worth every step when at the end of each day we fought to replace our lost energy with mountains of pasta before putting on every last piece of clothing to climb into our sleeping bags at -18 degrees!

My appreciation for the life that we have in our local community was hugely enhanced by the expedition – Otford is a very special place to come home to.

Overwhelmingly generous support has raised over £6400 - if you would like to add to this, you may do so online at <https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/simonfeatherstone1>

Simon Featherstone

MS
Multiple Sclerosis Society



IN MEMORIAM



John Miller 1929-2016

John was born in Cirencester in 1929 to George and Edith.

After leaving school, John did his National Service with the Navy and proudly served on board a Destroyer D17, HMS Alamein.

Dusty, as he was then known, wanted to make his career in The Royal Navy, but very sadly was found to be colour blind and that excluded him from being able to train as an Officer.

So, wanting to stay with his great passion, he joined the great british company Peninsular and Oriental Navigation Company or P&O as many of us know it. The P&O was the grandest and oldest of all the cruise lines and there John thrived.

Two ships on which he served were the Oriana and the Canberra. John's family had holidays on both and would see him either on deck in his very grand uniform or in White Tie in the evenings.

Sadly John's time at sea was cut short when he was in Honolulu and taken seriously ill and flown

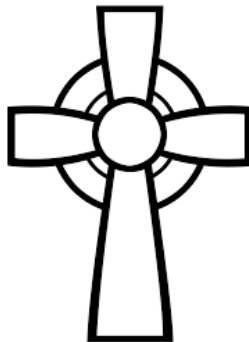
home. He had kidney disease and had to have one of them removed which meant he was not allowed to return to sea. This was a great blow for him, but wanting to stay with P&O he worked firstly for them in London and then, when they transferred their headquarters to Southampton, relocated down there to live.

John retired in 1986 and moved into his lovely house in Warham Road in Otford. But that call of the sea is very powerful and before long John was back at sea, this time working with Saga as a tour leader – a job he absolutely loved.

He also loved MGs and over his life he had a range of them. There's a great picture of him and Sue in Rome back in the late 50s and he then went on to buy one of the new MGs called an MGF which was his great pride and joy.

John served as Hon. Treasurer for the church magazine for many years.

John died very peacefully in his favourite chair watching the football. He is a much missed brother, uncle, great uncle and friend to many, both on land and sea.



OUT AND ABOUT...

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3rd Sept 11.30am – 4pm

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Otford.reunion@outlook.com



OTFORD EVENING WI

The subject of our September meeting is The History of Pearls and Pearl Jewellery.

Our speaker is John

Llewellyn-Jones and we meet on the 8th September at 7.30pm in the Club Room of Otford Memorial Hall. If you would like to join us our President can be contacted on 01959 524831.

WI Tabletop Sale Otford Village Hall

Saturday 22nd Oct 9.30-12.30

Tables £10 contact Chris - 01959 522485

OTFORD-NEUFCHATEL-HARDELOT TWINNING



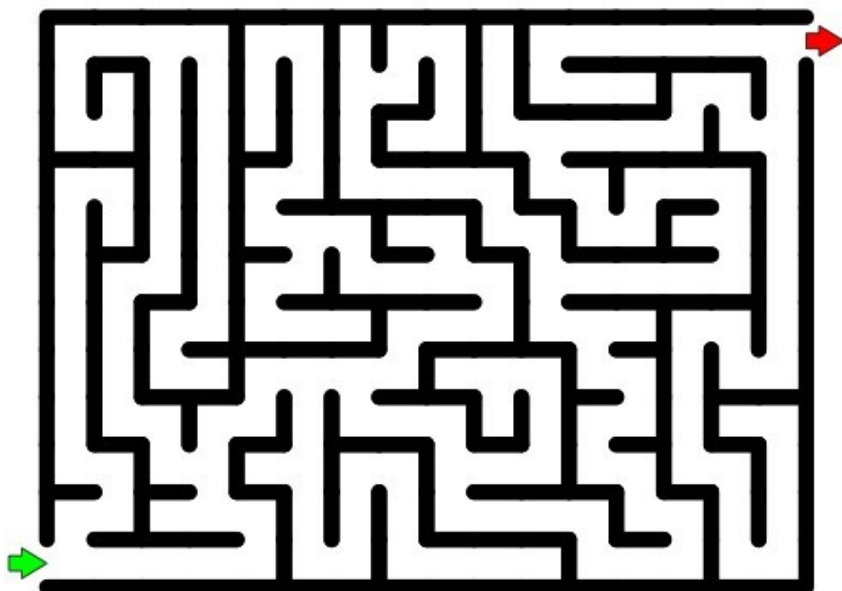
Our HardeLOT Twins are coming to Otford on a car-sharing weekend 23--25

September. If you would like

to offer hospitality please contact Jane Lawrey by email kl@sevmail.co.uk

If you would like to meet them for tea and cake on the Friday afternoon between 4.30pm and 6.30pm in the Club Room of the Village Hall please offer to bring a cake and we shall look forward to seeing you.

SEPTEMBER'S PUZZLE



THE NIGHT SKY IN OTFORD SEPTEMBER 2016



In recent issues we've looked at the movement of the Earth and the apparent change in position of the Sun and stars. On September 22nd the autumnal equinox occurs for us in the northern

hemisphere, whilst in the south it is the spring, or vernal, equinox. In simple terms this is when day and night are of equal length although the equinox actually occurs at a moment in time; 15.21 BST to be precise. At that time the centre of the Sun lies at the intersection of two lines in space; the ecliptic and the celestial equator. To recap, the ecliptic is the apparent path of the Sun through the constellations during the year (caused by the Earth's progression around its orbit) and the celestial equator is the projection of the Earth's equator out into space.

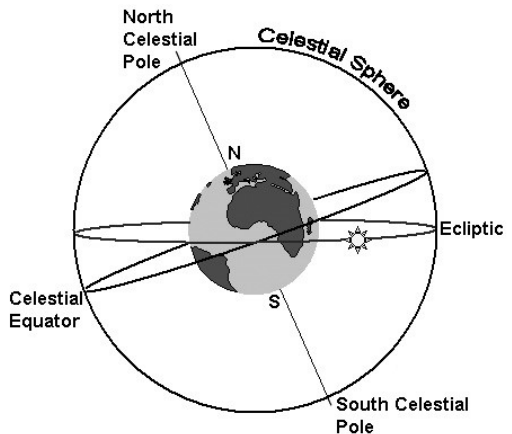
The ancients believed that the stars and planets were fixed to a celestial sphere (or spheres) at a great distance and that the Earth was stationary at the centre of it. Although of course we've known for centuries that this was incorrect, the premise is convenient when explaining such things as the ecliptic and equator. These are both known as "great circles" and can be considered, in this context, as being circular lines drawn on the inside of the celestial sphere. These circles cross in two places, at the spring and autumnal equinoxes. In the spring the Sun, moving along the ecliptic, crosses the celestial equator going north after which the days get progressively longer. In the autumn the Sun crosses the equator going south to give us shorter days and longer nights.

Many people are aware that we have a "Pole Star" called Polaris that can be found using the

two stars at the front of the Plough. However, the position that this star occupies is more correctly known as the north celestial pole (NCP) and is the projection of the Earth's axis of rotation onto the celestial sphere. To be precise, Polaris is not exactly at the NCP, it is about half a degree away from it although to anyone looking to find north, this would be of little consequence. Of course, in the southern hemisphere the south pole projected into space and onto the celestial sphere would be the location of the south celestial pole (SCP).

If you look towards the south-south-west around 8.30 to 9 pm during early September you will see Mars and Saturn about ten degrees above the horizon. Mars is the brighter of the two and noticeably red, whilst Saturn is slightly higher and a little to the west (right).

Brian Mills FRAS



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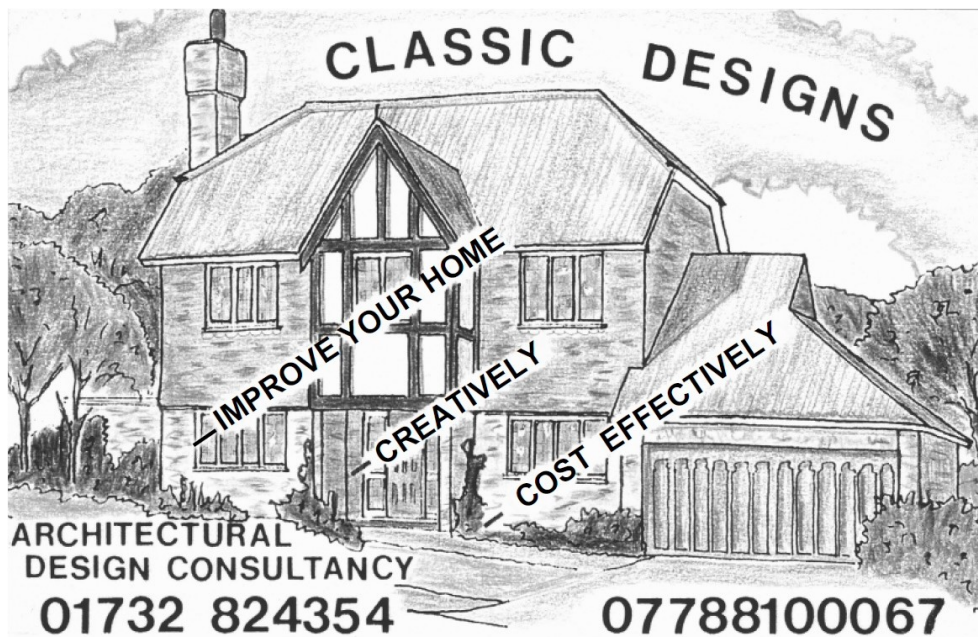
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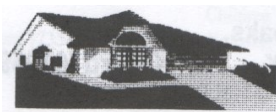
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CHURCH COUNCIL The Vicar and the Churchwardens Margaret Lidbetter* and Russell Edwards, Samantha Barnett, Joan Beacom, Cindy Davies, Dawn Hallam*, Andrew Hill, Mark Holmes, Vicki Howie, Janet Hunt*, Mike Jones, Bill Lattimer, Nick Page, Derek Shilling#, Mags Southgate, Anne Stevens, Mark Tierney

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