

St Bartholomew's Church, Otford Parish News



SERVICES AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

October	8.00am	10.00am	3.00pm	6.30pm
2nd Oct	Holy Communion	All Together Worship for Harvest	-	Festal Evensong for Harvest
9th Oct	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	-	-
16th Oct	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	-	Evensong
23rd Oct	Holy Communion (BCP)	Holy Communion	-	-
30th Oct	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	-	-

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 theirs 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 by Richard Worssam

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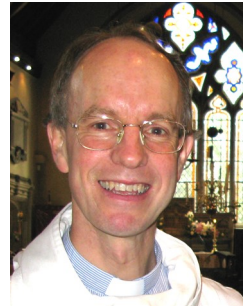
Magazine No. 10 Volume 86

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

Over the last few weeks we have been privileged to watch the inspirational performances of members of Team GB in the Rio Paralympics. Many of the athletes are now household names, such as the wheelchair racer Hannah Cockroft, the runner Jonnie Peacock and the swimmer Ellie Simmonds. It worth pausing a moment to reflect on their courage and determination.

Hannah suffered two cardiac arrests within 48 hours of being born which resulted in damage to two areas of her brain and left her with deformity to her legs and feet and weakened hips. However, from the outset, she was determined to make the most of life. As a child she took part in creative dance lessons and played wheelchair basketball, and then her sporting talent was spotted and she started training for wheelchair racing. She is now the world record holder in the 100, 200 and 400m T34 events, and she won three gold medals at Rio. But she didn't do this on her own. She has written, "As long as my family are behind me and supporting me, I will always be determined to achieve great things."
(www.hannahcockroft.co.uk)

Jonnie was just five when he contracted meningitis which led to the amputation of his right leg just below the knee. However, he didn't let this set him back. I've seen a video of Jonnie hopping around his classroom on his good leg when at junior school. He was directed to a Paralympic sports talent day by the hospital that fitted his prosthetic leg, and his talent for running soon shone through. At the Paralympics he successfully defended his title and won gold in the T44 100m event. Jonnie acknowledges the support he has had along the way, for example going back to the times when his mother would carry him to school when his below-knee stump was too sore to wear his prosthetic leg.



Ellie was born with achondroplasia dwarfism. Though small in stature, she is large in determination. She started swimming at the age of five, and she won her first Paralympic medal at the age of just 13. She is now a world record holder in various S6 events and five-time Paralympic champion. Interestingly, although she is now world famous she recently highlighted the performance of the whole team saying, "The team spirit we had in the group was just unbelievable."

This sentiment has been echoed by other members of Team GB. They are all incredibly talented athletes, and this is demonstrated in the amazing achievement of winning 147 medals at the Rio Paralympics, including 64 golds. But they also spoke of the support that the team members gave one another, and how early medal successes led to an excitement and enthusiasm that spurred others on to do their best.

Jesus also knew about the power of teams when he chose a team of 12 disciples who together changed the world.

As the Paralympic athletes have spoken about the support they have found from their families and fellow Team GB members, and as Jesus and his disciples demonstrated:

T ogether
E veryone
A chieves
M ore.

Your friend & Vicar, Richard 3



DIARY FOR OCTOBER 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**

- 1 9.00 am Churchyard Working Party

- 2 **The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity: Harvest Festival**
 8.00 am Holy Communion
 10.00 am Harvest Festival
 6.30 pm Festal Evensong for Harvest
- 3 Monday Homegroup outing to Norfolk
- 4 2.00 pm Otford Primary School KS2 Harvest Church
- 5 9.30 am 'First Steps' (Otford Evangelical Free Church, Pilgrims Way West)
 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
- 8 6.00 pm EPIC (Church Centre)

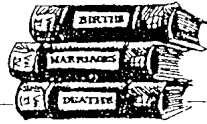
- 9 **The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity**
 8.00 am Holy Communion
 10.00 am Holy Communion
 12 noon Baptism of Willow Francis
- 10 7.45 pm Discussion (31 Well Road)
 **Magazine material for the November edition by today, please to the
 Church Office, st.bartholomews@otford.net**
- 11 8.00 pm Mission Links Team
- 12 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) coffee afterwards
 3.30 pm Ecumenical Committee (38 Warham Road)
- 16 **The Twenty-First Sunday after Trinity**
 8.00 am Holy Communion
 10.00 am Morning Worship
 12 noon Baptism of Isla Cox
 6.30 pm Evensong
- 17 7.45 pm Homegroup (16 Tudor Drive)
- 19 9.30 am 'First Steps' (Otford Evangelical Free Church, Pilgrims Way West)
 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
 8.00 pm Finance and Standing Committee meeting (Church Centre)

- 23 **The Last Sunday after Trinity (BCP 22): Bible Sunday**
 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
 10.00 am Holy Communion
 12 noon Baptism of William Clucas

- 24 7.45 pm Focus (17 Leonard Avenue)
- 26 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
- 2.30 pm Ecumenical Fellowship Group (Church Centre) - Illustrated talk by the Vicar on his Sabbatical: "From Iona to Yellowstone - Reflections along the Way"
- 30 **All Saints' Day**
- 8.00 am **Holy Communion**
- 10.00 am **Morning Worship**
- 31 7.45 pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)



Registers



SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING

24th August Tobias Isaiah **Bell**

BAPTISM (Our Welcome)

18th September George David Curt **Benckert**
18th September Klara Susan Mia **Benckert**

WEDDINGS (Our Congratulations)

7th August Alex **Rose** and Jennifer-Anne **Chambers**
2nd September Nicholas **Osborne** and Cassandra **Thornborrow**
10th September Jason **Tilbrook** and Charlotte **Chandler**
17th September Edwin **Thompson** and Brenda **Hambrook**
17th September Matthew **Keys** and Kirsty **Walker**

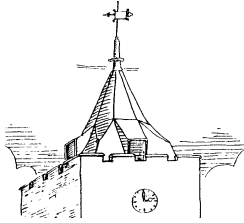
WEDDING BLESSING

10th September Daniel **Payne** and Emily **Bent**

FUNERAL (Our Sympathy)

22nd August Carol **Burton** (aged 65)
11th September Michael **Jones** (aged 84)

FROM ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH



HARVEST SERVICES

Our Harvest Services 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 support the Sevenoaks Food Bank (Loaves and Fishes) and St. Saviour's Priory in East London with gifts of food.

The Diocesan 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 Bishop's 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.

CHURCHYARD WORKING PARTY

A reminder that the last two churchyard working parties of the year will take place on Saturday, 1st October and Saturday, 5th

November between 9.00 and 11.30 am. Any support will be most welcome.

ECUMENICAL FELLOWSHIP MEETING

The October Ecumenical Fellowship meeting will be held on Wednesday 26th October at 2.30 pm in the Church Centre. The Vicar will give an illustrated talk about his recent Sabbatical. Refreshments will be served after the talk, to which everyone is welcome.

THE CHRISTMAS MARKET

This will take place in the Church Centre on Saturday, 19th November from 10.00-12 noon. Stalls will include: gift wrapping; cards; Christmas tree and table decorations; candles; cakes; bulbs (the growing kind!); Christmas sweets and chocolates; and a herb and spice craft stall. A super Christmas raffle is also planned. A full list of stallholders will be given in the November magazine. Please put this date in your diary and come and enjoy a happy time with your family and friends, joining together in support of our church work.

Sylvia Grafton

REDECORATION AND RE-ORDERING UPDATE

We are very grateful for the positive and encouraging response to the "Pass It On" appeal earlier in the year together with the Antiques and Collectibles Valuation event and the Easter Flowers Gift Day. This gave us the basis to continue working over the summer with refining details on the plans. We are now at the stage where we are seeking the Diocesan Advisory Committee's consent to apply for a faculty for the works, and we have sent out tender invitations to six firms. We are also making one more application to a grant-awarding body. We'll be sharing more information as it comes in, and further details are given on a sheet at the back of Church.

MISSION MATTERS...

The Bible Society

The Bible Society is one of St Bartholomew's long-term mission partners.

The Society was founded in 1804 following the incredible determination and perseverance of a 15 year old Welsh girl Mary Jones, who, hearing that the Bible was available in Welsh, saved for six years and then trekked 26 miles in order to buy one and read the Bible in her own language for the first time. Rev. Joseph Hughes who actually sold Mary three Bibles for the price of one, was inspired by her perseverance and faith. He spread the word and, captured by the thought of the Bible being made available to all people of all languages, William Wilberforce held a meeting in a tavern in Bishopsgate and formed the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Since then the re-named Bible Society has indeed done just that, translating the Bible and parts of scripture into hundreds of languages and dialects and opening centres in 143 countries, distributing, educating and helping people to engage with the Bible. When people take the Bible's message to heart, lives can change for good.

The Society has developed from its original roots in the UK, holding events in the House of Commons to encourage MPs to fulfil their duties with the message of the Scriptures in mind, engaging school children in Bible stories, providing digital resources, organising events in a world where too many people no longer engage with the Bible. This work enables people to realise the relevance of the Bible in a modern world and their everyday lives.

Internationally there has been massive demand for Bibles. In China, since a more open attitude has been adopted by the Chinese authorities,

over one million people every year are finding faith in God. The Bible was once a banned book and believers worshipped in secret. Now churches are overflowing. Demand is threatening to outstrip resources. The Society has printed over 68 million Bibles and has 77 distribution centres. In a society where 51 million adults are illiterate the Society assists local churches to run literacy classes.

In the Middle East and Africa the Society works in some very difficult situations. For example, the Gaza shop has been damaged by bombing on more than one occasion. In Africa the Society continues its work in countries recovering from conflict and dealing with poverty.

The Bible Society has a long track record of working in Africa. It has witnessed the power of the Bible to bring hope and peace to even the most troubled communities. The message of the Bible can build bridges where there is conflict and offer hope where it is most needed.

The Society works to affirm the place of the Bible in our society, challenging ill-informed thinking and demonstrating that the Bible can be a force for positive change in today's world.

Is the Bible something we take for granted, a message we ignore, a book that sits on the shelf gathering dust? This same Bible that changes lives around the world can change and help ours as well. *Andrew Hill*





DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS

Telephone: 01732 227000 www.sevenoaks.gov.uk

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

The summer is now almost over and that autumn chill is in the air first thing in the morning as children return to school.

It's an exciting year for Trinity as they move into their brand new building in time for their first few pupils to sit their GCSEs. While at the same time the building works for the Weald of Kent Grammar Annexe is also well under way for next September's first intake.

September 1st was Starts at Home Day; a national day to celebrate supported housing while the government reviews funding for it. Supported housing is any kind of extra support, short of a care home, to enable people to live independently. It could be for older people, victims of domestic abuse, members of the armed forces adjusting to civilian life, people with mental or physical health issues.

On behalf of Sevenoaks District Council, I was delighted to support the day in partnership with Rockdale Housing Association. The Leader of the Council and I, as well as Rockdale staff and council officers, dressed up in an ageing suit to really understand the needs of older people and how our policies can help our residents to live independently for as long as possible.

The suit weighs you down, restricts your movement and impairs your hearing and sight. It was a big eye-opener for me to really understand what it is like to be frail. This is part of the Council's independent living agenda to use our tools (planning, housing, licensing etc.) in a holistic manner to do all we can for the wellbeing of our residents.

Monday 19th September was National Housing Day which celebrated the contribution that

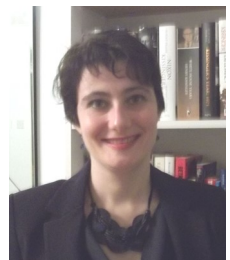
affordable housing has made in keeping families and communities together and enabling people on lower incomes to live in decent accommodation. You only have to watch 'Call the Midwife' to see the importance of good quality housing.

Sevenoaks District Council supported this day in two ways. Firstly, we worked with West Kent Housing Association from 10am until 3.30pm at Whiteoak Court, Sycamore Drive in Swanley to offer housing support and advice to people over 55. Advice provided included adapting homes to make them more suitable and enable independent living, as well as downsizing and energy efficiency advice. If you were not able to attend but would like to know more please contact the Housing Team at SDC on 01732 227000. You don't have to live in a social home to be entitled to some of this support.

Secondly, from 6pm until 8pm in the evening we had officers from our housing team (including our HERO officer), as well as from West Kent Housing Association and Moat Housing Association, who gave housing advice to households with incomes under £35,000 who want to remain living in the district. There are affordable housing options and we wanted local people to be aware of what they are.

With best wishes,

Michelle



LYRICS AND LIVES: HYMN WRITERS ACROSS THE CENTURIES

Cecil Spring Rice is the author of the famous hymn, “I vow to thee my country”, but few of us know anything of his working life.

Son of a diplomat in a well-connected Anglo-Irish family and the third of nine children Cecil lost his father at a young age but nonetheless received his education at Eton and Balliol. He obtained a double first and began his career in the Foreign Office. However, his Liberal sympathies and his stance in favour of Home Rule for Ireland caused the incoming Conservative government to move him to the Diplomatic Service.

Many an overseas posting resulted, initially Washington in 1887, Japan and then Berlin where he met and fell in love with the Ambassador's daughter, Florence Lascelles. He became Charge d'Affaires in Persia then St Petersburg from where he travelled to Berlin to be married in 1904. He later became the Ambassador to Sweden, then Persia and finally to the USA in 1912.

Cecil was a born diplomat, good at picking out and cultivating the most important person in a place. One such man was Theodore Roosevelt who he first met in 1886 and with whom he maintained a lasting friendship.

Naturally he was involved in many pieces of diplomacy over the years. Whilst in St Petersburg in 1904 he warned of a war between Japan and Russia and corresponded with Roosevelt over American mediation. He experienced increasing German influence in Sweden. However, his influence was most important when he was in Washington during

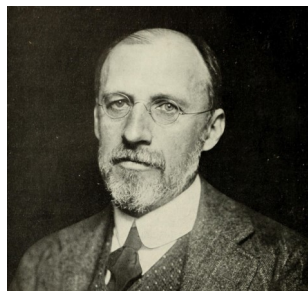
WWI. America was keen to stay neutral in the conflict and Cecil was responsible for justifying British wartime policies to the US government and leading British efforts to persuade them to enter the war on the side of the Allies. America entered the war in 1917.

Inevitably his diplomatic activity ruffled some feathers at home and Cecil was recalled to London in 1918. He travelled via Canada where he died in Ottawa in 1918.

However, we are more familiar with him as a poet. 'I vow to thee my country' is part of a longer poem, *Urbs Dei*, or *The Two Countries*, partially rewritten just before his own death. He saw the sacrifices of the young men in the trenches and these together with his own diplomatic efforts colour the attitude to service we find expressed in his hymn. War and rumours of war throughout his time as a diplomat must have made him long for the heavenly kingdom with its ways of gentleness and peace. How sad that he died before the Armistice.

We can only ask that our modern politicians will take note of his motivation and emulate his example by serving their countrymen in selfless love rather than out of personal ambition.

Gillian Shilling



FAITH IN THE FAMILY...

October: The Promise of Harvest

Pause for thought: Take time to read the story of Noah on p.14.



It feels familiar to parents due to its popularity as a subject for picture books, and the many Noah's Ark toys available for young children.

Yet the story is not for the faint-hearted. God sees that the world has been spoilt by the evil and violent ways of his people and is 'grieved' that he ever made mankind at all. He decides to wash away every living thing in a flood, but to make a fresh start with the one good man who 'walked with God' whom he will rescue, along with his family, in the ark.

Perhaps we can begin to understand the pain that God felt when we are faced with our own young children arguing, fighting and trying to hurt one another. This wasn't the dream we had of blissful family life! We shouldn't lose heart. What delight we feel as they mature and spontaneously display acts of kindness. So they *have* soaked up our values after all!

All down the ages, people have continued to go their own way. But God loves us so much that he planted his own Son on the earth, like a seed of kindness. Jesus showed us how to live and died on the cross for us, thereby 'spring-cleaning' us of our selfish ways and continually giving us a fresh start every time we say sorry.

The baptism service has a link with this washing clean and new start. At the baptism of a child, parents, godparents and the church family

promise to support him or her in their walk of faith through guidance and example. Perhaps some of the following activities will be of help.



Family storytelling: Read aloud the story of Noah from p.0, perhaps with a toy ark or a picture book to hand as a visual aid. Wonder about the story as follows:

I wonder how God felt when he saw people acting badly

I wonder how Noah explained building the ark to his wife. Have a go!

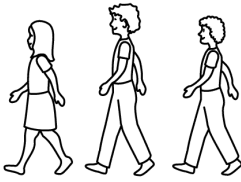
I wonder what it was like *inside* the ark all that time? Have fun imagining what Noah's family might have seen, heard, touched, tasted – and, yes, smelled?

I wonder how God feels when we act unkindly?

Clean and sparkling: On a bright October day, put on boots and old clothes and wash any garden toys/ furniture that you are putting away for the winter, or a car/bike. Can you spot a rainbow if you let the sun shine through the jet of water from the hose? Link with the idea that the flood gave the earth a clean start.

Family walkie-talkie: Go on a walk around the recreation ground. Try to imagine a flood growing so deep that it covers the hedges, houses, trees, and then rises twenty feet above Otford Mount! Now imagine the water going down and the tops of the hills poking out of the water.

Have an all-age game of follow my leader. Now walk *alongside* the leader. He/she says quietly that they are going to walk very fast, very



slowly, jog, skip, etc and the others have to listen and keep pace. Link with the idea that Noah 'walked with God'.

What do you think this really means? Explain that God is always at our side, ready to help us. How good are we at remembering that? Challenge everyone to spend a day being aware of this. How good are we at matching our footsteps with God's and listening to what he is saying to us?

If you want to discuss something important with a teenager, a leisurely walk or a long drive can provide good opportunities.

Family dispute: Children can argue over anything. It's perfectly normal! "It's *my* turn to sit on the new car seat!" "Dad said I could choose the story tonight!" When things have calmed down, you could try explaining that hearing all the arguing makes you feel sad. "I'd had a terrible day at work and I was so looking forward to hearing your happy voices . . ."

Ask each of them how they would sort out the situation fairly if they were in charge!

Play a light-hearted game of *Make friends/Argue*: Two members of the family improvise a friendly conversation. At a signal, they now turn this into a comic argument. At another signal, the conversation becomes friendly again. Name the two 'characters' who might be chatting over the garden fence, a cat and a dog on the pavement, etc! This works well on a long car journey. Encourage everyone to think about moving things on next time there is a difference of opinion.

All the colours of the rainbow: After the flood, God promised: "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

Eat a rainbow! Everyone chooses appropriately-coloured fruit, berries and vegetables for their healthy lunch boxes

Pack a shoebox with rainbow ingredients to bring to the Harvest Service on Sunday 2nd October

Make a rainbow mobile to hang from a bedroom ceiling. Cut out a big semi-circle and colour in arcs of Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo and Violet. Hang raindrop shapes and a sun shape from the bottom. You could write "Trust God" on the sun.

Older children might like to research how a rainbow is formed, on the Internet.

Show you care! Give unexpected gifts at half term (rainbow socks/ sticky notes/friendship bracelets/pens/ Noah picture book, etc) to encourage them for the second half of term.

Bath time fun: Tell the Bible story, pretending that your young child is Noah. There is going to be a flood. Ask him/her to put a toy boat or empty margarine carton in the bath. He/she pretends to ask family members and animals of their choice, to climb aboard. Shut the doors! Now God opens the floodgates! Turn on the taps and watch the boat float! Watch the water recede as you pull out the plug. Well done, Mr Noah, for listening to God and obeying Him. You have now rescued your family and all the animals! The origins of Paw-Patrol . . . ?

Vicki Howie



IN CONVERSATION WITH...BOBBIE FAIRCLOUGH

As Tower Captain, Bobbie probably spends more hours of the week in St Bartholomew's than most members of the congregation...

Bobbie grew up in Sherborne, Dorset and well remembers loving the sound of the bells of Sherborne Abbey where she and her family attended services. This experience was enough to spark a lifelong ambition to ring bells; a dream that came true sixteen years ago when Brian Raynor asked her to join a team being trained to ring the four new bells in St Bartholomew's. The bells had been generously donated by Ken Dickinson in memory of his wife, Joan. Prior to that time the church just had two bells which could only chime rather than being capable of turning full circle, a process which allows methods and changes to be rung.

Bobbie, who took over as Tower Captain from Janet Raynor in 2003, gave me an outline of the complexities of bell ringing. She said that it takes about six months of training before you become sufficiently proficient to be allowed to ring unaided but that you never stop learning and developing new skills. She described how ringing is mentally challenging with many sequences and patterns to be memorised, though young people (from the age of twelve) are old enough to learn. Once you have gained the necessary basic skills you can ring anywhere, with churches throughout the country ready to welcome visitors to their teams. Bobbie currently spends a minimum of eight hours a week ringing in St Bartholomew's and other local churches. As well as ringing for regular services, the bell ringers also ring for

weddings and funerals, and are pleased to consider requests to ring for special occasions.

From her childhood home in Sherborne, Bobbie moved on to work for Marks and Spencer where she was a member of the store management team. It was when based in Liverpool that she met her future husband, John, a master mariner. After their wedding they moved from Liverpool to Essex, then back to Liverpool before finally settling in Otford in 1983. By then they already had one child, Julian, and their daughter Astrid soon followed. John now worked as a consultant marine surveyor and, as his employment often involved travel, Bobbie remained in Otford as the anchor of family life.



Throughout her adulthood Bobbie has been involved in volunteering. For some fifteen years she was involved with the Otford Cub Scouts;

firstly as a Scout Leader and then as Group Scout Leader. She said she has 'wonderful memories of some real little rascals'!

Once her children were older, Bobbie became a member of the Independent Monitoring Board for prisons – an appointment that would last for sixteen years, with the first nine years spent visiting Maidstone prison and the last seven monitoring an immigration removal centre at Gatwick. Bobbie described the job as being 'the public's watchdog', ensuring fairness and respect for people in custody. As a Board member she had direct contact with prisoners who could speak to her about anything that concerned them. Particular memories include having gone to Maidstone prison one Christmas day and seeing normally tough men tearful as they missed their families. On a lighter note she told of a visit made shortly before Christmas one year, when prisoners were allowed to give gifts to their children via the prison Father Christmas (a serving prisoner); the Father Christmas confided to her afterwards that he loved his special role, not least because he felt he was maintaining traditions – his father had been the prison Father Christmas before him!

When Bobbie became Chair of the Independent Monitoring Board at Gatwick she was working for up to thirty hours a week. Her view is that life in the immigration centre is ten times more challenging than life in prison. The reason is that the detainees (most of whom are young men in their early twenties) have no knowledge of when they might expect to get out – many have been held there for a year or more. One especially memorable experience at the immigration centre was when she accompanied a flight of detainees back to Islamabad. She had wanted to stretch her legs outside the plane before returning home but, when she saw some men with Kalashnikovs standing on the tarmac, she decided to stay on board!

Aside from bell ringing, Bobbie also finds time to co-ordinate the volunteers, and look after the excellent range of cards and stationery, at the League of Friends shop at Sevenoaks Hospital. I understand that the cards are exceptionally good value with £1 being the highest price charged.

Bobbie has a quiet Christian faith which has informed her wish to volunteer. She strongly believes that all people are capable of reform.

Christeen Malan



ANCIENT WISDOM - MODERN LIVES

The story of Noah and the ark is one of the most well known in the Old Testament. We tell it to our children when they are small, and we might sing the story, too: how God told Noah to build an ark, collect all the animals in twos, the forty days and nights of rain, and eventually the receding of the flood waters allowing the animals and people to come out of the ark together with a rainbow marking a covenant of blessing.

These details are probably familiar, but here are a few things you might not remember about the story.

When God told Noah to build the ark it was nowhere near any water. God gave Noah some very careful instructions about building the boat, specifying sizes and materials.

In addition to taking on board the animals, God told Noah to make sure that there was enough food for them all to eat; that was a lot of harvesting and storing.

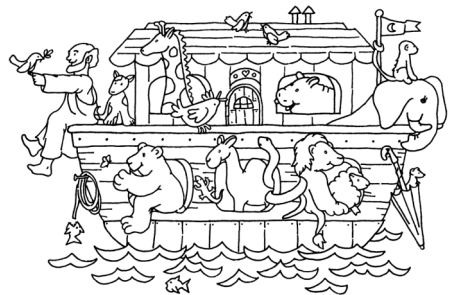
You may recall that the animals went on board two by two; but for some species there were more than two on board. In some cases, if it was an animal that was permissible to eat according to strict food laws, then there were seven pairs; so that's fourteen sheep baaing constantly, but only two elephants trumpeting. Imagine the noise.

Noah wasn't just in the boat for forty days. It rained for 40 days, but the text says they were in the boat for over a year. Five months after the adventure started the ark came to rest on a mountain, whilst everywhere else was still

covered in water. Gradually the waters started to go down and they could see other mountain peaks. Noah released one of the ravens, but it came back. Then he let a dove go, and this time it came back with an olive leaf, showing that things had started to grow again. Finally, when Noah released the dove again, it didn't come back, telling Noah that there were trees that the dove could live in. Noah then waited another two months before the land was dry enough for him to open up the ark and let his family and the animals out. That's a very long time to wait to put your feet back on solid ground.

The first thing Noah did was to give thanks to God, and God's big promise to Noah was that he would never flood the land again in such a fashion. We see a sign of that promise every time we see a rainbow in the sky. God also promised that there would always be seed time and harvest, and we see a sign of that every year when we celebrate harvest festival.

Dawn Hallam



THE NIGHT SKY IN OTFORD OCTOBER 2016



If you look at the Moon from the 4th of this month until around the 7th, you can see how its phase slowly alters as the days pass. This is due to it changing its position as it orbits the Earth, gradually

revealing more of the illuminated hemisphere to us. Don't forget that half of the Moon is always sunlit; it's just that we can't always see it all. If you do manage to see the Moon on these days you will note that its phase is that of a crescent. However, if you look more closely you will also be able to see some of the dark portion as well which is much fainter than the bright crescent. This is what is known as "Earthshine" and is caused by sunlight bouncing off the Earth and striking the Moon to allow us to see the rest of the side that is turned towards us.

In fact we rely on that same principle to see a whole host of bodies in the Solar System like the planets and their moons as well smaller bodies like asteroids. In simple terms, sunlight falls upon them and we see the light that they have reflected. We very much rely on the Sun not only for light but also for heat because, in astronomical terms, it is extremely close to us. The stars that we see in the night sky are all themselves suns, just like our own. In fact many of them, such as Antares in Scorpio, are much larger than the Sun, so much so that if we were to replace the Sun with Antares its surface would reach out to beyond the orbit of Mars.

If some of the stars are as massive as this, you might wonder why they appear to be so faint. The answer is that they are a long way away

from us, so far in fact that it is difficult to comprehend the distances involved. For instance you may have seen an item on the news about a planet being found in orbit around a star called Proxima Centauri. This star is, to use astronomical jargon, just over four light years away and is the closest star to Earth. It doesn't sound much does it, until we calculate what a light year is. Light moves at a speed of 300,000 kilometres per second, so to find out how far light would travel in a year we have to make the following calculation. $300,000 \times 60 \times 60 \times 24 \times 365$, which gives us a result of 9.5 trillion kilometres. This has to be multiplied by 4 (we said Proxima Centauri is 4 light years away) to find that its distance is 38 trillion kilometres. Don't forget this is the *nearest* star to the Earth!

At the other end of the scale, the most distant object that you can see with the naked eye is M31, the Great Andromeda Spiral Galaxy. It is coming into view now and will be well placed in the coming months although even in a large telescope it doesn't appear to be nearly as impressive as it does in the photographs. M31 is 2.5 million light years away, so if you want that in kilometres, you need to multiply that number by 9.5 trillion. I think now you can see why astronomers use larger units than kilometres!

Don't forget that BST ends at 02.00 BST on October 30th.

Brian Mills FRAS

IMAGES AND INSIGHTS

I am very grateful to the Diocese and St. Bartholomew's Church for making it possible for me to go on Extended Ministerial Development Leave (EMDL) over the summer. It was a real privilege to be able to share in the life of some Christian communities in beautiful locations in England and Scotland, to attend some fascinating conferences, to read some inspiring authors, and to travel to places that I had long wanted to visit with the family.

I have much to share with you about the experiences and insights I have gained along the way. In this article I'll restrict myself to three word-pictures and images.

The Skylark

My very last act of ministry in the parish before going on leave was to inter my mother's ashes in the Garden of Remembrance at St. Bart's. So I found that a recurring theme in my EMDL was working through the feelings of bereavement.

For her funeral, one of the pieces of music that Mum had requested was Vaughan Williams' "Lark Ascending". It is a beautiful piece, and as you listen to it you can imagine the skylark climbing higher into the sky until finally the music fades from human hearing, as if taken up into heaven. So now whenever I hear a skylark singing it carries special associations with Mum.

One occasion I remember in particular was while I was staying on the island of Iona. On Tuesdays, a member of the Iona Community leads guests on a pilgrimage around the island, using geographical and historic features as stepping stones for meditations on particular themes. As we visited the ruins of the medieval nunnery we thought about women who had played a special role in the nurturing of our faith. I found myself

giving thanks for my mother's faith, and as we walked on, I found I needed some more time to myself, so I took my leave from the group and walked across moorland and over a hill to the very southern tip of the island. Here there is a beautiful bay called St. Columba's Bay. For the best part of an hour I had the beach to myself and I sat by the shore on a large rock worn smooth over the millennia by the waves. As I listened to the ocean, and watched the changing pattern of clouds in the sky and felt the breeze on my face, I found a profound sense of connectedness. It was then as I made my way back up the path leading away from the beach that I heard a skylark sing.

The Trellis

On the corner of our Vicarage there is a beautiful pink climbing rose. The first summer that we were here I noticed that it was struggling because, for some reason, it had no support. I attached a trellis to the wall and tied the rose to it, and since then it has flourished. The framework of the trellis, far from impeding or restricting the rose, has given it the support it needs to grow and bloom.

The same can be true for the spiritual dimension to our lives. A clear framework for times of prayer and reading the Bible can be a great help in allowing our spiritual lives to flourish. I observed this to be the case in all the places I stayed. When I arrived at the Franciscan monastery at Glasshampton in Worcestershire where my brother Nick is the Guardian, the first thing I noticed in my room was a timetable inviting me to join the brothers in their regular pattern of prayer.

The day began in chapel at 7 am for Morning Prayer, followed by half an hour of silence, and

then Holy Communion. After breakfast guests were free to do their own studying or other activities, and then we met again in the chapel at midday. After lunch I would go for a walk in the beautiful countryside surrounding the monastery. There was Evening Prayer before supper with the opportunity for a further time of silent prayer. And before going to bed we met in the chapel for Compline.

This structure gave a clear focus and identity for the monks' life together, and I found it very refreshing to join in with the flow of community life based around prayer, study and work.

Now we would expect this structure in a monastery, but it was also true of the other retreats and conferences I went on; all had a clear pattern of prayer and worship and the rest of the day would flow around this.

What is true of such places can also be true in our own lives. We don't have the same lifestyle as the monks at Glasshampton, but nonetheless we can design a structure that can accommodate our own work and personal commitments, and this will ensure that our times of prayer do not get squeezed out by the other pressures we face. If we do so then our spiritual lives may well benefit from this as much as the climbing rose at the Vicarage benefits from the trellis.

Travelling Companions

Living in a village which has the Pilgrims' Way running through it, we are reminded of theme of journeying in the spiritual life. Chaucer's pilgrims did not travel on their own; rather, they had travelling companions along the way.

A helpful definition of a pilgrimage is a journey to a sacred place with an openness to God. This definition can be applied to ourselves, also, as we journey through life with heaven as our goal. We do not do this on our own for right

from the moment of our birth this is an accompanied journey.

One of the aspects of my EMDL which I most valued was the opportunity to meet up with others along the way and to share thoughts and experiences with them. I went on a conference in Devon, on the edge of Dartmoor, at which the author Margaret Silf led us in a series of talks and discussions about the development of faith and aspects of emerging spirituality. She was a wonderful raconteur and spoke using stories that were both amusing and also profound. It was very helpful to then discuss these themes in thought-provoking ways as we encouraged one another.

I also attended a "Mid-Ministry Conference" at a retreat house in West Sussex organised by the Diocese. This was attended by a small group of fellow clergy, all of whom had been ordained for twenty years or so. It was very good to share with them in an open and trusting fashion. We were drawn from different traditions in the church, and yet there was great mutual respect and support.

At another conference in Hertfordshire on "Shakespeare and Theology" I met up with a friend with whom I'd shared a study while we doing our ordination training. He has served for many years in inner-city Liverpool and has recently become Archdeacon of Buckingham, and we had a great time together catching up on news and sharing insights from our ministerial experiences.

What is true of these conferences can also be true for our church, as God has called us together to encourage each other along the way through mutual listening and support.

I have much more that I would like to share, and I'll be doing so over the coming months in different ways. *Richard Worssam*

OUT AND ABOUT...

OTFORD VILLAGE SOCIETY - SAVE THE DATE!

Otford Community Christmas Party on Saturday 3rd December. 7:30pm til late.

Otford Village Society is hosting this celebration and fundraising event to raise money to refurbish the Otford Memorial Hall.

Featuring: Local beers and wine, magic, music, wine tasting, face painting, hog roast, raffle and silent auction.

Tickets £10 adults, £5 children, available soon!

OTFORD-NEUFCHATEL-HARDELOT

TWINNING Our next social gathering will be on **Monday 24 October**, 7.30pm in the rear bar of the Woodman pub. We will be reviewing activities of the past year and discussing plans for next year. New members are very welcome to pop in. Any queries, feel free to contact Jane Lawrey on 01959 522360.

OTFORD EVENING W Our next meeting is on the 13th of October @ 7.30pm in the Club Room of the Otford Memorial Hall when we welcome back Colin Breed to amuse us with more anecdotes about Royal Visits to Kent. Visitors are very welcome and for more information, please contact our President on 01959 524831.

Make a date for our annual Table Top Sale on Saturday the 22nd of October, 9.30 to 12.30 in the Otford Memorial Halls (and the bacon butties come highly recommended).

Tables can be booked via Chris on 01959 522485.

KEMSING SINGERS NEEDS YOU - rehearsals start 12th Sept

Do you fancy some fun and fine singing. Come and have a go. Talk to Sheila Dickerson on 01959 524183 or visit kemsingsingers.com for more info.

Rehearsals are on Mondays 7.30-9.30 at St Edith Hall, Kemsing from September to June.

OTFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

We were very pleased to welcome all our children back to Otford Primary for the start of a new school year. The first week was exciting for both the children and staff as they embraced a "Creative Curriculum". Children will be learning about areas of the National Curriculum which stem initially from their interests. Learning opportunities will enable them to make strong tangible links to other subject areas throughout the course of their school day.

We also welcome our new Reception children into Otford who have settled extremely well into either the Squirrels or Woodpecker classes. I am very impressed by the high level of independence

demonstrated by these children, some of them only just turning 4!

I am delighted to be in the highly privileged position of leading a dedicated team of professionals at Otford Primary who strive every day to ensure each and every child reaches their full potential. We very much look forward to further developing links with the local community and consider the school to be at the heart of this special village. We look forward to visiting the church and being able to update you on any news.

Best Wishes to you all

Mrs Helen Roberts (Headteacher)

PUZZLE PAGE

All Hallows Eve - or Holy Evening

Modern Halloween celebrations have their roots in pre-Christian times. In those long-ago days, on the last night of October, the Druid priests celebrated the Festival of Samhain, or 'Summer's End'. They lit great bonfires and performed magic rites to ward off the dark supernatural powers of oncoming winter. Today,

Christians turn to prayer instead of charms to overcome the powers of darkness. And the deeper, true meaning of All Hallows' Eve, should not be forgotten. As Christians, we all draw closer to Christ when we remember and give thanks for our loved ones and for others who have gone before us through the gates of death to heavenly glory.



All
Hallows
Halloween
Druid
Priests
Festival
Samhain
Bonfires
Magic

Dark
Supernatural
Powers
Winter
Christians
Prayer
Charms
Deeper
True

Eve
Closer
Christ
Thanks
Loved
Death
Gone

BEACOM FAMILY FAVOURITES



Chicken with Bacon and Basil

Serves 4

8 skinless, boneless chicken thighs
Fresh basil
8 rashers streaky bacon
Can/carton chopped tomatoes
Medium onion chopped
Clove of garlic crushed
Chicken stock cube
Salt and pepper to taste
1 oz / 30g pine nuts toasted (optional)
(To toast yourself, gently toss pine nuts in a clean frying pan over a med heat keeping them moving until they are lightly browned)

Place one or two basil leaves inside chicken then roll the bacon round the outside.

Place in a casserole dish.

Gently sweat the onion and garlic in a little oil for 2-3 mins in a frying pan.

Add the tomatoes, stock cube and seasoning to the frying pan and turn up the heat until the mixture is bubbling, add pine nuts if using.

Pour this over chicken in casserole.

You can add extra chopped basil if desired.

Cover and cook reg 6 / 200deg for about an hour.

Serve with creamy mashed potato or rice and fresh veg

ENJOY

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Sevenoaks Aerials	28	Lawn and Garden	26
Architectural Design		Gas Services	
Classic Designs	23	Wicks Gas	27
Builders Decorators Plumbers		Health	
APM Building Services (7oaks)Ltd	27	Pilates	26
Easton Electrical	25	Hair and Beauty	
Richard Boyle	24	Milo's Barber's	29
Chaili Plumbing	24	Head to Toe	29
Newbury and Tapper	23	Halls for Hire	
Otford Kitchens and Bathrooms	33	Otford Church Hall	32
Painting and Decorating	39	Hotel	
Clean Gutter Company	36	The Bull Hotel, Wrotham	34
Towns Bathrooms	28	Leisure	
Cars & Bikes		Darenth Valley Golf Club	36
Express Factors (car spares)	35	Oil Suppliers	
Palmar Motorcycles (bike spares)	35	Spar Oil Services	28
Weald Coachworks	32	Pharmacy	
Chimney Sweep		Otford Pharmacy	29
David Fairman	27	Printing Services	
Computers		Silver Pines Services	37
Need help with your computer (Prosphero)	32	Scouts	
Disco and Lighting		15th Sevenoaks (Otford) Scouts	22
Silver Pines Sound and Light	37	Taxi	
Domestic Appliance Repairs		Space Travel	37
Trevor's Domestic Repairs	24	Timber Treatment	
Education		Gulliver Timber Treatment	38
Russell House School	30	Treework	
St Michael's School	30	Down to Earth	38
Estate Agent		Watch and Clock	
Ibbett Mosely	31	MJ Leach	27
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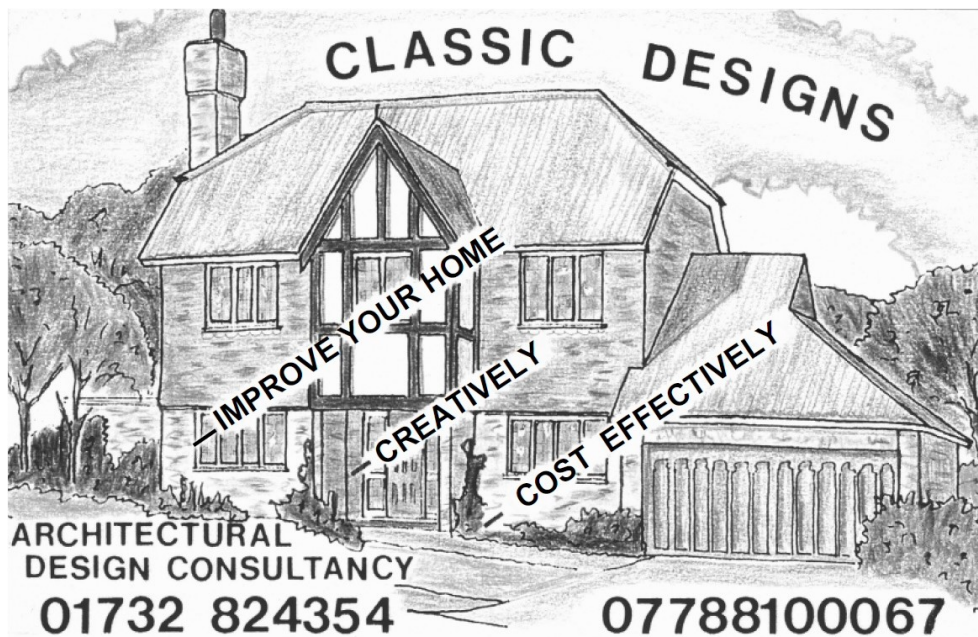
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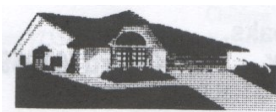
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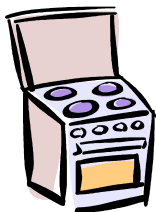
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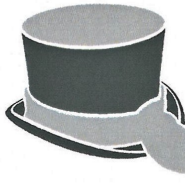
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RAISING THE BAR OF KENT'S DINING SCENE

THE BULL IN WROTHAM

One of Kent's most high-profile restaurants, The Bull in Wrotham, has appointed new executive chef, Adam Turley, who worked under Michel Roux

.....



Adam Turley is a classically trained chef who deepened his knowledge working under Mark Flanagan (now personal chef to the Queen) before moving onto the Michelin star kitchen at The Waterside Inn where he worked with Michel Roux Snr and Alain Roux. Since then, Adam has made quite a name for himself cooking beautifully presented dishes using modern techniques and winning his first AA Rosette in 2009 at the Bluebells Restaurant & Bar in Sunningdale, Berkshire.

Kent is a blessed county with an amazing range of quality produce, surprisingly there are only 3 Michelin star restaurants in the whole county. The growing number of foodies willing to try exciting menus outside London makes it the perfect time for a new Michelin trained chef in Kent.

The Bull in Wrotham Sevenoaks is exactly what many of us crave: an ambitious restaurant, which does its classy thing without being self-conscious about it. As owner Martin Deadman says "What I have learnt running a place is that it evolves, the food can't stay the same for 5 years. That is why it is so exciting working with Adam. His cooking is wholesome, hearty, mouth-watering and visually attractive. We are now investing in new equipment, crockery and changing the kitchen's layout to enable Adam to serve his new menu to our growing clientele".

The Bull's new menu will be first unveiled to a selected group of clients and will be available to the public from 9th September. The evening menu is reasonably priced at £38 for three courses and £30 for two courses including freshly baked bread, nibble and refresher. The Set Lunch Menu is £17 for two courses and £22 for a three-course meal and is worth the trip to Wrotham in Sevenoaks.

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- READER EMERITUS:

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Sacristan: Tony Grogan 01959 523649	
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