

The Parish of St. Bartholomew

Church and Village News



SERVICES AT THE PARISH CHURCH

April	8.00 am	10.00 am	5.00 pm	6.30 pm
Mothering Sunday (3rd)	Holy Communion	"Church Family" Worship for Mothering Sunday	CU@5	Evensong
5th Sunday of Lent (10th)	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	CU@5	-
Palm Sunday (17th)	Holy Communion	Palm Sunday Procession from Methodist Church at 10.45 am and Service on Village Green at 11 am	-	Evensong
Maundy Thursday	Re enactment of the Last Supper, Tenebrae and The Watch 8.00pm			
Good Friday	Informal service for Good Friday—10.00 am		Last Hour at the Cross 2.00 pm	
Easter Sunday (24th)	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	-	Festival Evensong

Sunday Mornings

SUNDAY CLUB (for ages 0-14)

Crèche: 0-2 years (every Sunday)

Infant (3-7)

Junior (8-11)

Senior (12-14)

These groups meet in the Church Centre during the 10.00am service, except on first Sunday when in Church for Church Family Worship.

Sunday Evenings

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

Weekdays

HOLY COMMUNION

Every Wednesday 10.00am (BCP)

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

Cover photograph taken by
Magazine printed by Silver Pines Services (see page 36).

Vicar's Viewpoint



This month sees the eagerly anticipated wedding of Prince William to Kate Middleton in Westminster Abbey. The planning has been going on for months, and the event is attracting much media attention. It will be an occasion for national celebration, as reflected in the extra bank holiday that has been granted.

It also provides an opportunity to reflect on marriage itself. This is a topic which keenly debated by policy makers, politicians and the press. The Office for National Statistics provides data that makes for interesting reading. Naturally enough, social commentators seek to interpret this data with their own particular emphasis, but what strikes me is the continuing importance of marriage for family life and society. There are some modern demographic changes. For example, people are waiting longer to marry these days. The average ages for first marriages in 2006 were 31.8 years for men and 29.7 years for women. (*ONS 2008*) But what is still true is the beneficial impact marriage has upon family stability.

In the 2010 edition of the ONS publication *Population Trends*, researchers compared data from the 1991 and 2001 Census returns and found that of those who were cohabiting in 1991, 61% were with the same partner 10 years later, whereas by contrast 82% of those who were married in 1991 were still with their spouse in 2001. Jill Kirby, Director of the Centre for Policy Studies, said: "The Government persists in saying there's no difference between marriage and other forms of relationship but these official statistics are telling us, from a completely neutral standpoint, that there is a difference. Living together is not an equivalent to marriage for family stability. That's why it's important to protect and support marriage, in the interests of children."¹ (A host of other interesting marriage and family statistics can also be found at www.marriage-week.org.uk on their "Marriage Facts" Sheet)

I find that preparing couples for marriage and conducting weddings is one of the most rewarding areas of parish ministry. It is a privilege to share in this significant moment in their lives. Also, in a time when there is considerable pressure on family life, a wedding in church provides extra resources for the couple to draw on. As they live out their marriage vows, they will be doing so not just in their own strength, but in the context of God's abiding love. This is illustrated in the opening words of the wedding service: "God is love, and those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them." (1 John 4:16) God's love as seen in Jesus is marked by joy, faithfulness, forgiveness, and commitment - all profoundly important qualities for a successful marriage.

So our prayers and good wishes go not only with William and Kate as they set out on the adventure of married life, but also for all couples getting married this year, and especially for those getting married at St. Bart's!

Your friend and Vicar, Richard

¹<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/7523186/Marriage-more-stable-than-living-together-Office-for-National-Statistics-finds.htm>



DIARY FOR APRIL 2011

**Morning Prayer is said in Church on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays
each week at 9.00 am**

3 The Fourth Sunday of Lent: Mothering Sunday

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am "Church Family" Worship for Mothering Sunday

5.00 pm CU@5 (Church Centre)

6.30 pm Evensong

4 7.45 pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)

5 8.00 pm Lent Series 4 - Church 'R' Us - Jean Kerr (Church Centre)

6 10.00 am 'First Steps' Easter Service (Otford Methodist Church)

10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

9 9.00 am Churchyard Working party

10 The Fifth Sunday of Lent: Passion Sunday

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Holy Communion

11.30 am Vicar's 50th birthday reception in the Church Centre

5.00 pm CU@5 (Church Centre)

Magazine material by today, please, to the Church Office:

st.bartholomews@otford.net

11 7.45 pm Coffee & chat (50 Well Road)

12 8.00 pm Lent Series 5 - Church 'R' Us - Bill Lattimer (Church Centre)

13 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) coffee afterwards

8.00 pm Annual Parochial Church Meeting (Church Centre)

16 9.00 am Church spring cleaning

17 Palm Sunday

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.45 am Palm Sunday Procession leaving from Otford Methodist Church

11.00 am Open Air Service on the Village Green

6.30 pm Evensong

19 8.00 pm St Bartholomew's Fair Committee ('Lorien', St Michael's Drive)

20 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

21 Maundy Thursday

**8.00 pm Re-enactment of The Last Supper, Tenebrae and The Watch
(St Bartholomew's)**

22 Good Friday

10.00 am Informal service for Good Friday

2.00 pm The Last Hour at The Cross

23 9.00 am Decoration of the church for Easter

- 24 **Easter Day**
 8.00 am **Holy Communion**
 10.00 am **Holy Communion**
 6.30 pm **Festival Evensong**
- 27 9.30 am 'First Steps' (Otford Methodist Church)
 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) coffee afterwards



Registers



Funeral (Our Condolences)

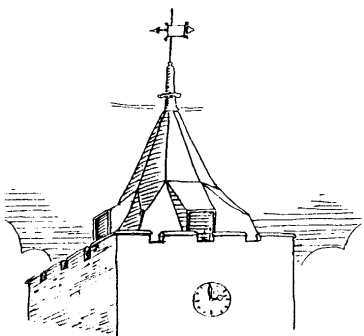
- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 9th February | Andrew Harry Barber (aged 83) |
| 16th February | Ann Booth (aged 84) |
| 19th February | Angela Mary Hallinan Hooper (aged 73) |
| 13th March | Beatrice Mary Giddings (aged 91) |

Church Offerings in February 2011

Open Collections for Charities and Church Expenses.....£ 466.70
 Freewill Offering.....£5,552.00



"It's the only way we can cope with all the couples who want to get married on the same day as William and Kate."



From St. Bartholomew's Church

Mothering Sunday - 3rd April

You are warmly invited to our Mothering Sunday services. Posies will be offered to ladies in the congregation.

Palm Sunday Procession - 17th April, 10.45 am

There will be a united churches' procession, beginning at Otford Methodist Church at 10.45 am and ending with an act of worship on The Green, followed by refreshments in the Church Centre. Palm crosses will be available at all services on that day.

Maundy Thursday - 21st April. There will be a re-enactment of The Last Supper, Tenebrae and The Watch at St Bartholomew's commencing at 8.00 pm.

Good Friday - 22nd April. There will be a service for all ages at 10.00 am in the Church Centre and also 'The Last Hour' service of hymns and readings in Church from 2-3.00 pm.

Easter Day - 24th April. There will be services of Holy Communion at 8.00 and 10.00 am. At 6.30 pm there will be a service of Evensong. Do join us!

Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held on Wednesday 13th April at 8.00 pm in the Church Centre. We do hope you will join us as we look back with thanksgiving and forward with hope.

CU@5. This informal service, held weekly in the Church Centre at 5.00 pm, is taking a break after 10th April for the Easter holidays and will re-commence on Sunday, 8th May. Do come along if you haven't been before - and if you have, do bring your friends!

Churchyard Working Party. This will take place on Saturday, 9th April at 9.00 am. Please come and join us if you can.

The annual **Service to Commemorate Departed Loved Ones** will be held on **Sunday, 8th May at 3.00 pm.** At this service, the names of departed loved ones will be read out and there will be an opportunity to light a candle in memory of them.

St Bartholomew's Fair: Saturday 11th June 2011 at 2.00 pm. Once again, the Church Fair will be held in the grounds of Castle House by kind permission of Mark and Irene Roy, and there will be the usual array of stalls and attractions. This year all proceeds will go to Church Funds so please book the date in your diary (**a week earlier than last year**) and come and support St. Bartholomew's Church. If you can help in any way, please contact Colin Fleetwood (5233582), Margie Torry (524463) or the Parish Church Office (523185).

Spring Cleaning. The annual spring cleaning of the Church for Easter will take place on Saturday 16th April from 9.00 am onwards. Please come along if you can help and bring dusters, polish, etc. with you. Thank you.

Flowers for Easter. If you would like to give a donation towards the flowers at Easter in memory of a loved one, please hand it to Sylvia Grafton, 01732 452117, Susan Reid, 523234, or to the Parish Church Office.

WORK SOON TO START ON CHURCH TOWER

English Heritage have now confirmed their offer of a Stage 2 grant towards the proposed work to the church tower and other high level work on the basis of the specification drawn up by Thomas Ford & Partners and the tender offer from Bakers of Danbury Ltd.

The PCC met in March to approve both the terms of the English Heritage grant and of the contract with Bakers. This contract is expected to span a period of approximately sixteen months with phase one lasting roughly five months from the start this month. Phase two is expected to start around April/May 2012 and last for approximately three months. It is likely that the tower - and bells – will be out of use for much of phase one and all of phase two. Present plans are for the tower to be scaffolded externally throughout both phases and the intervening period.

Whilst the main work relates to removal of both the internal and external render and its eventual replacement with lime render, the contract also includes repairs to the timber floor & roof structures in the tower, alterations to the rainwater disposal system of the tower roof, demolition of the redundant boiler house, infilling of the original coal hole, masonry repairs to the west gable of the south aisle and some alterations to the electrical equipment cupboards, seating, and heating in the ground floor of the tower. Under a separate contract, the 16th century porch will be renovated which will involve the temporary removal of the sides and doors so that they can be worked off-site whilst the scaffold is in place around the tower.

Costs for stage 2 of the project are likely to be of the order of £230,000 before VAT, although most of the VAT payable on the project will be recoverable under the Government's "Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme". The Stage 2 grant from EH is for £44,000 and this, together with money from the Tower appeal, and the Church Repair Fund adds up to a little over £132,000. The balance of the costs will be met from the parish reserves and the generous legacy from the estate of the late Dorothy Swift, given for the repair and maintenance of the church and churchyard.

The detailed planning for the work is now underway. We are hopeful that a start can be made on setting up and preliminary work before Easter with the external tower scaffold being erected soon after, after which removal of the old cement render can begin.



IN MEMORIAM



ANDREW BARBER, 1927-2011

Andrew was born in Clapham in 1927. He was educated at Colfes Grammar School. During the war this was amalgamated with several other schools and all pupils were transferred to Shooters Hill. Andrew met his wife, Brenda, at a dinner dance in Putney in 1956. They got married in March 1958 and soon afterwards came to 29 Well Road where they have lived ever since. The family grew to include two sons, Andrew born in 1962 and Richard born in 1964, and more recently three grandchildren.

Andrew was articled to Davson and Pritchard and qualified as a Chartered Quantity Surveyor. He joined the firm Pritchard, Williams and Hunt in 1954. In 1964 he left the firm to start his own building supplies business based in Meopham. Andrew sold the business and retired at the age of 60, twenty three years ago. This gave him time to finish the extension to the house he started some years earlier.

He was a member of the Honourable Artillery Company whilst working in London. He had a keen interest in the Lifeboat Institution and supported them regularly. In his younger years he was also a keen motor cyclist and belonged to Eltham and District Motor Cycle Club. A keen walker, he always put the walking boots in the camper van when going on holiday. In particular, he loved the Lake District. He read widely, especially in English history. Andrew was actively involved in the life of the village, and took a keen interest in any new building developments. He served for many years as a committee member of the Otford Society, and as a key holder of the Heritage Centre. He will be greatly missed by friends and family alike.

ANN BOOTH, 1926-2011

Ann was born in London in 1926. At 8 weeks old she was fostered, and then adopted by Margaret Johnston who ran a school at Ockley, near Crowborough. After studying at Tonbridge High School, Ann went in 1946 to Dunfermline PE college. She met her husband, Anthony, whilst staying with her aunt in Folkestone, and they got married in 1949, shortly after her graduation. At first they lived in Hartley, and then moved to Gravesend. Ann got a job teaching PE at Gadd's Hill School in Higham.

In 1952 the family moved to Cobham and Ann ran the Post Office. She also ran a number of other enterprises including a wool shop and a tea room, whilst also breeding dogs. Family life was also busy, with two sons and two daughters.

In 1970 the family moved to Scalers Hill and they opened the Nook Boarding Kennels. One of the dogs bred by Ann got to Crufts. Ann continued in the family business until 2006 when, at the age of 80, she moved to live with her daughter in Beechy Lees Road. She joined the Otford Lunch Club, and was also a member of the WI. She will be remembered as being enterprising, hard working, good at listening, welcoming, devoted to her family, and true friend to many.

MISSION MATTERS.....CHURCH MISSION SOCIETY

Colin and Anita Smith: CMS Mission Partners, Kenya

These are extracts taken from the CMS Link Letter No.31 : January 2011

Greetings from Nairobi

Colin started the New Year with a certain sense of relief. It has been a very difficult time for Carlile College for a couple of years and much of last year Colin was covering three posts. In November, the college board appointed Peter Nyende, an ordained Church Army captain, as the new principal. As a former student and senior staff member Peter has a clear sense of the college's history and its future direction. He comes to us having been head of Biblical Studies at the Africa International University. His arrival meant that Colin could hand over the role of heading up the academic side of college life with all the administration that goes with it. Those of you who are aware of his almost non-existent administrative skills will realise that this was greeted with great relief all round, not least from the team at the Centre for Urban Mission. The college is still in the process of transition but we enter the New Year hopeful and trusting God for what lies ahead under Peter's leadership.

Anita writes...

In my pastoral role amongst the largely non-churchgoing European community in Kenya, being salt has been about being accepted by the community, and so being available to be and bring a Christian presence to the key events in people's lives. How much influence there has been on an individual's spiritual growth would be difficult to tell, but one family have invited me to run a small Bible story group for their own and their friends' young children. While small, it is encouraging to find signs of parents keen for their children to learn about God and what faith means. Like many families at this time we are deep in exams. Sheila is preparing to take her A levels and then hopes to do a gap year in E Africa. Sandie is doing GCSEs and she and I are revising together!

Life in Kenya

Kenya appears to be moving towards a period of political change. The new constitution offers the prospect of a significant alteration to the political landscape that many are longing to see. Perhaps spurred on by that momentum, Kenya's anti-corruption chief seems to be moving with a speed and determination that many would not until recently have thought possible. At least one Government minister has had to step down in the face of investigations. Meanwhile, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court has taken the political elite by surprise naming six key people he wishes to bring to trial in respect of the post-election violence. Those named include the head of the Civil Service, the head of the Police, and the Deputy Prime Minister. After years of impunity there is a growing sense within the nation that political leaders can be held accountable, although significant resistance remains. Building just communities begins at grassroots but there are at least some signs that winds of change are touching higher places.

SAINT OF THE MONTH....

Catherine of Siena 1347- 1380 Saint's Day: 29th April

As well as being the date of the royal wedding, 29th April also marks a day of celebration for another Catherine – Saint Catherine of Siena. Born in 1347, her father was a cloth dyer and her mother is said to have been the daughter of a local poet. Catherine (Caterina Benincasa) was the last but one of twenty five children, many of whom died in childhood. A visionary and theologian, she is one of Italy's two patron saints, the other being St Francis of Assisi. The extent of her religious and political influence was quite exceptional for a woman in the fourteenth century.



From an early age, Catherine had visions and when she was seven she committed herself to Christ. At sixteen, she took the habit of the Dominican Tertiaries - devout women who lived under religious orders in their own homes. After three years of mystical experiences and religious meditation, she began to work for the sick and the poor and started to gather a group of disciples around her. In 1370, after a mystical near-death experience, Catherine received the command to go abroad and save souls.

She travelled throughout Italy advocating reform of the clergy and, in due course, began corresponding by letter with all manner of people including those in authority. Her aims, which were always God-centred, included bringing peace between the republics and principalities of Italy. She had a long correspondence with Pope Gregory XI and also visited him in Avignon where she was influential in encouraging the return of the Papacy to Rome. However this did not halt the Great Western Schism.

Although lacking education, Catherine is deemed to have had an impressive theological mind. She wrote many letters of which over three hundred survive and, whether corresponding with Pope Gregory XI, the Queen of Naples, or ordinary people, the letters have the same forthright and frank approach. For example, in a letter to a noble lady, Monna Agnese Malavolti, who had recently suffered the loss of both her son and daughter, Catherine seeks to affirm God's presence in the midst of this pain, 'For nails were not enough to hold God-and-Man nailed and fastened on the Cross had Love not held Him there.'*

In her last letter to her confessor and biographer, Raymond of Capua, Catherine describes wracking pains in her heart and body. She died in Rome, where she was living at the behest of Pope Urban VI, at the age of thirty three.

Saint Catherine of Siena as Seen in Her Letters. London: J.M. Dent, 1905; New York: E.P. Dutton, 1905 (edited and translated). Accessed online@ <http://www.domcentral.org/trad/cathletters.htm>

REFLECTION ON..... OTFORD

By Lana Flain

It has been said that the journey is the best part of a holiday. This is not true when I visit my friends in Kent. Immediately I leave the manic M25 motorway and drive through Eynsford, Shoreham and round the idyllic duck pond at Otford, I know I'm nearly home.

In winter, with the trees stripped of their foliage, the views are beautiful to behold: well-kept hedgerows revealing last year's nests; a patchwork of cultivated fields; lavender bushes grey – waiting to burst into vibrant violet lakes with a heady aroma; the shape of the many trees, silhouetted against the darkening sky – Arthur Rackham style; sheep grazing on the undulating hills; a mixed herd of cattle grazing away on the flood plain nonchalantly chewing the cud, oblivious to the ever-increasing traffic speeding past!

Sometimes we get caught up in the "Rat Race Life", working to deadlines, hurrying to catch trains and buses. Retirement gives back the time to reflect on what really matters and is important in life. I see the beauty of nature, how she takes the rough weather, cold, ice and snow, taking these hardships and getting through to Spring. I notice the snowdrops braving the earth's hard crust – what perfection in such a small insignificant flower! Aconites multiply miraculously, catkins appear and buds open, defying Winter's blast. I see people taking time to greet one another asking, with meaning, if they can do anything or help in anyway. Otford village abounds with such people which I feel makes it a most inviting place to live. But for me to keep returning is always a joy and a pleasure.



OUT AND ABOUT



SEVENOAKS EMBROIDERERS' GUILD An exhibition to celebrate ten years of the branch will be held on April 16th and 17th in Otford Village Memorial Hall and St Bartholomew's Church Hall - Saturday 11.00 am - 3.30 pm and Sunday 11.00 am - 3.00 pm. Admission is £2.00. Light refreshments will be available.

The Exhibition includes the 'Decades' project—members had to produce a piece of work representing the decade they were given, also the 'Metals' project incorporating gold work and mixed medium. There will also be demonstrations and traders. Further details from Sylvia Grafton 01732 452117 or Pat Thornhill 01322 270053.

THE QUILLING GUILD - OTFORD BRANCH Please note we do not meet in April or May. The next meeting will take place on Saturday 11th June. Further details from Sylvia Grafton 01732 452117



OTFORD EVENING WI are celebrating their 42nd birthday on 14th April, 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm. After a hot supper we will be entertained by the Tonbridge Mummers. This is the one evening in the year when it is members only.

We would be so pleased for anyone intrigued to know why the WI has become so popular lately, to join us on Thursday 6th June when Monty Parkin, a well known local speaker will be talking about Sevenoaks Markets. For more information please contact Eve Wiltshire on 01959 524887.

OTFORD OAST WI 'A modern voice for women' The next meeting will take place on Thursday 14th April, 9.30-11.30 am in the Otford Village Hall. Our talk on this occasion will be on Gardening for Wildlife. Our meeting in May will be our AGM plus Phoenix Cards and Jewel Cards will be with us. There is a free crèche at every meeting. The first meeting is free. Bring a friend! Patsy Groom 01959 524156

WOMEN'S BREAKFAST - 'FAMILY MATTERS' Saturday 9th April at 8.30 am in Otford Methodist Hall. The speaker will be Celia Bowring. The cost will be £4 . To book a place please contact Margaret Matthews on 01959 522046 or Sue Word on 01689 869081.

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN SEVENOAKS AND DISTRICT COMBINED CHOIRS present excerpts from Handel's 'Messiah' on Good Friday, 22nd April at 7.30 pm at The Drive Methodist Church, Sevenoaks. Admission Free, retiring collection. All are welcome.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Chairman: John Allen

Parish Clerk: Brenda Hambrook

Tel: 01959 524808

email: parishcouncil@otford.net Web: www.otford.info/parishcouncil

The Heritage Centre has shared the School House building with the Parish Council for about eleven years and has changed and increased the number of exhibits during that time. For some it is an essential part of Otford, and visitors come to see things from Otford's past on any day of the week. It now requires a greater area to show and store the large amount of material held by Otford residents.

The Parish Council has also increased its functions during this period and requires more space, not least for the information it now holds and which can be vital for planning applications.

During the last ten years those working in the Heritage Centre have quietly met all the requirements for it to become a museum, but as part of the government's economy drive the system of acknowledgement for becoming a museum has currently been suspended. It is still hoped that Otford might have a larger Heritage Centre or even a museum at some point in the future. A small band of people have handled the work up to now. However, additional help from more people will be needed if a larger centre is to succeed in future. Many different kinds of help will be required if Otford is to have the distinction of showing and explaining its long and remarkable history.

From the Parish Council viewpoint, being able to show that our village has a long and interesting history is a help in dealing with higher levels of government. It gives force to preserving all that is good in Otford (and increases the desirability of living here).

The hiatus in repairing our pond would not have occurred if the history of its repairs over many years had been known to those making the decision on the work proposed. When evidence of the past work was shown, the council officers accepted that we were continuing with tradition and repairs were completed. This was largely achieved through the help of those who had kept and/or assembled information of all kinds on Otford's past. Otford has benefited through their work.

These decisions are yet to be made, but the quality of Otford's environment will continue to be influenced by such voluntary work done by its residents.

John Allen



DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS

Telephone: 01732 227000

www.sevenoaks.gov.uk

Cllr.Lowe@sevenoaks.gov.uk

This month I thought I would write about the new Localism Bill and let you know what it will mean for you and the other residents of Otford.

The Localism Bill is a radical package of reforms that give local people a greater say in what happens in their area. It gives, for example, the community the 'right to buy' any local asset of community value such as a shop, library or pub. It also gives the community, in the form of the Parish Council, Otford Society, or any other voluntary group that believe they could better manage council-run services, the right to bid to do so and the council must seriously consider the proposal.

It will also allow local people to initiate a referendum on any local issue and the results must be factored into any council decision.

The other good thing in the bill from Otford's point of view is that it closes a few enforcement loopholes. So, most importantly, unauthorised developments will no longer be able to apply for retrospective planning permission - something which many residents have felt has been unfair for many years. Also, if there are any very large developments proposed in Otford, residents will be consulted before and not after the application is made to the council. This will give you a much earlier say.

The great thing about representing a village like Otford is that you never just accept things. The people of Otford know that they cannot stop change, but you do your best to manage it and make sure that it is for the best. That is why you got together and wrote the Village Design Statement which has now been adopted by Sevenoaks District Council, and why you are now finalising your Parish Plan. I believe that once the Localism Bill is passed there will be no stopping the people of Otford and that you will finally have the real tools at your disposal to do more of the things that you want to do and have more say in stopping the things that you don't. I can't wait to work with you all once you have more say in what happens to your village. There are exciting times ahead in Otford.

With best wishes

Michelle



KENT POLICE - Working with you in Otford and Shoreham

To report a non-urgent crime 01622 690690
Local Neighbourhood Officer PC Brian Smith – 07972 004450
Local Neighbourhood Officer PCSO Jane Wright – 07772 226036

Spring crime reduction advice from your neighbourhood policing team

With spring on the way many of us will be thinking about getting outside to spruce up our gardens so now is a good time to review the security of sheds and outbuildings. The value of property kept in sheds, garages and outbuildings can be much more than you would imagine. Lawn mowers, trailers, power tools and bicycles are just some of the items that are targeted regularly by thieves.

However, the following crime prevention advice may help to keep your property safe:

- Put all property away after use and lock the shed or garage.
- Shed alarms can be fitted quite cheaply and hanging curtains or nets at windows prevents the thief from viewing your property.
- Outdoor security lighting can also be installed at a low cost. Security lighting should be fitted at a height of at least 2.5 metres (eight feet).
- Do you have a clear line of sight to your shed or garage? If not, can trimming bushes and trees rectify this?
- Up-and-over garage doors can be made more secure by fitting a padlock with a hasp and staple to both sides.
- Double garage doors with a rim latch can be supplemented with a mortice deadlock.
- If your garage is attached to the main building ensure that connecting doors are locked and as secure as external doors.
- Security mark your property with your house number and post code. Details of specific makes, models and serial numbers should be recorded and stored safely. For larger and more distinctive items it is also useful to take photographs to keep with the other details also mentioned.
- All ladders should be locked inside sheds or garages so thieves do not use them to gain access to the rest of the house. If this is not possible, then try to chain them up.
- Expensive mowers and bicycles should be secured to a fixed object or the floor to make them more difficult to move.

You can register your property free on a national database at [**www.immobilise.com**](http://www.immobilise.com)

Reports indicate that the majority of these thefts are committed by people who check properties beforehand. When questioned, many owners remember seeing suspicious vehicles parked close to their properties or have had callers offering to do garden work or tree felling. If you see a vehicle you think is suspicious, please report it to the police. Do not put yourself at risk but if you can get the vehicle registration this is always very helpful.



COMMUNITY CLOSE UP

Focussing on....The Embroiderers' Guild

The Embroiderers' Guild, founded in 1906, has its administrative centre in Walton-on-Thames. Its present patron is the Duchess of Gloucester. It is the largest craft charity in the country.

The aims and objects of the Guild are:

- to promote the art of embroidery and related crafts;
- to educate the public in the history and art of embroidery and to undertake support research;
- to collect, document, preserve, exhibit and interpret examples of fine embroidery.



The Guild has 25,000 members worldwide, 85 young embroiderers' groups and 195 branches, of which Sevenoaks is one. The local branch was founded in 2001 by four established Guild members, who, alongside the Guild's aims, wanted to create a friendly, welcoming branch where newcomers and established members work together and share ideas.

Meetings are held on the last Saturday of the month at Otford Village Memorial Hall (no meeting in August or December). Morning sessions begin at 10.00 a.m., and usually members bring along their own projects on which to work. Coffee and biscuits are available, and on occasions workshops are held, sometimes led by members and sometimes by a visiting expert. The afternoon sessions begin at 2.00 p.m., when the programme normally features a speaker and/or demonstrator. We end the session with tea/coffee and homemade cake.

The meetings are open to anyone with an interest in textiles and embroidery, and all skill levels are welcome. We do not at present have a young embroiderers' group, but have approximately 85 adults, of whom about three quarters are fairly local.

It costs £35 per year to be a member, of which £20 goes to Guild Headquarters.

An exhibition of branch members' work is held every two years, and this year our exhibition celebrates 10 years of the branch. This will be held at the Village Memorial Hall and St Bartholomew's Church Hall on 16th and 17th April – see Out and About for more details (page 12). We also exhibit at Ardingly, and this year will be at the Tonbridge Lace Fair.

While many different embroidery styles are used, a speciality of some members is gold work, and one of our members was involved in the making of the beautiful gold work altar frontal often to be seen in use in St Bartholomew's Church.

If you are interested, do come along to a meeting; you will be most welcome. Further information may be obtained from Sylvia Grafton (01732 452117) or Pat Thornhill (01322 270053).

Sylvia Grafton

FAITH @ WORK

A day in the life of Janet Hunt, Bank Branch Manager

I leave home for the office at 7.20 am and head off over Ide Hill, across to Toys Hill then down through Edenbridge and on to East Grinstead arriving for a start of 8.30 am. This early morning or evening journey can be a challenge, especially in snow! On one occasion I caught sight of a magnificent stag, just walking down the road towards me. I was nearly past him before I realised what I had just seen.

We open the branch to the public at 9.00 am. Like most jobs, we have various tasks that need to be undertaken prior to opening, ready to serve those customers who need to do their banking early. My job particularly relates to the Audit and Personnel side of banking. I am responsible for the safety of the building for both staff and public, ensuring that visitors are who they say they are and have a need to be on the premises. (We recently had a winged visitor who stayed with us from Thursday evening to Tuesday morning; he left just in time before the pest control officer arrived!) I have to check that all staff undertake and complete their regulatory and mandatory training in order to certify that we are operating within the rules and regulations that go with modern banking.

Nowadays branch managers rarely meet customers since branches have specialists to deal with mortgages, financial planning managers who deal with investments and business bankers to assist business customers. For one hour per day and on a Saturday I get to talk with customers when I take a turn out in the banking hall meeting and greeting customers as they arrive (known as floor walking). I direct customers, advise on how to use the various machines, (no counter service on a Saturday) and manage the counsellors who sit with customers and deal with their account enquiries.

I am very much a point of reference for the less experienced team members serving the customers, having worked in many different areas: branch banking, processing centres and training. Should we have a problem we are unable to resolve, there are a wide range of computer-based manuals for reference. If all else fails, a wide group of people I have worked with before are available at the end of a telephone who can point me in the right direction.

Before the start of my working day, I try to offer the day ahead to God, knowing that I will be better able to deal with whatever challenges are thrown at me during the day. The journey home provides time to reflect on the day, and put it behind me before changing role to that of wife and mother.

EARTHQUAKE IN CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

Inside *Hair of Otford*, bright banners read 'Welcome Home'. The sentiment is particularly heartfelt. Colin Robinson, who owns the salon, arrived in Christchurch, New Zealand at the end of a long holiday, on the day the earthquake struck. I asked him about his experience.

What took you to New Zealand? My son Joseph had always wanted to have an adventure holiday there. We flew into Auckland and travelled throughout North and South Island, walking, pot-holing, rock climbing, bungee jumping and so on. It was the holiday of a lifetime!



What happened when you arrived in Christchurch? We drove in to the city to see where to drop off the camper van the next day and decided to do some sight seeing. We visited the Cathedral, the river and the park and then drove out along the coast road towards Littleton and Bromley. We were enjoying the scenery of cliffs and sea when we noticed that small rocks were falling into the road. Joseph told me to look in my rear view mirror and I saw that half the cliff was disappearing into the sea. Driving on, I was dodging ever-bigger debris. We thought it was just a landslide but, rounding a bend, we came across a boulder the size of a car. We jumped out of the van to try to roll the boulder off the road with the help of some construction workers travelling in the opposite direction. As we struggled with it, we felt a strong after-tremor and realised that there had been an earthquake. Everything seemed surreal.

What did you do then? The road behind us was blocked, so we drove on towards the next town, away from the cliffs. Here, people were coming out into the streets looking confused and carrying radios. We gathered around the town hall, listening to the news and realising why the town had no power or water. Consulting our map, we decided to try to get to the airport by a circuitous route that avoided Christchurch, but this proved impossible as a bridge was down. This meant that we had to drive back through the suburbs and into the city.

Describe the scene in Christchurch. Ambulances and fire engines were everywhere and people were coming out of their houses covered in grey dust. There was chaos, but no panic – and there was a strange silence. Almost every road we saw was damaged or flooded. The community spirit was amazing. Locals (whose own homes had been devastated) were guiding drivers around gaping holes and pushing or digging cars out of trouble. No traffic lights were working and again the locals took it upon themselves to direct the traffic. There were swarms of mosquitoes.

We spent over nine hours driving and trying to get out of Christchurch, during which time we had nothing to eat or drink. Most of the roads out cross a bridge and all of these were unsafe.

So how did you manage to leave the city? We eventually arrived at a bridge that was twisted like a helter-skelter. A guy there told us that cars had crossed it, but that he couldn't guarantee our safety. By that stage there seemed to be no alternative and we took the risk. Driving further away from the city, we picked up a telephone signal and contacted the airport staff who told us to go to Auckland! I drove for 15 hours, only having a break on the Picton to Wellington Ferry. The adrenalin kept us going!

What did you think of the media coverage here in the UK? It all seemed to focus on the city centre when in fact there was so much damage to outlying towns. My thoughts go out to the people who have lost relatives, livelihoods and homes. Many houses looked undamaged, but their foundations must have been badly damaged.

What are your lasting thoughts about the whole experience? Looking back, it all seems like a Hollywood film. I can hardly believe it happened. We are just so glad to be alive. At the same time, I feel desperately sorry for the people who can't leave because that is their home. All the after-shocks must be very frightening.

Nature is so powerful. We live on a planet that is alive and constantly changing. But what will endure for me is the way people ignored their own losses to help others in trouble.

Vicki Howie

FROM THE SCHOOLS

Otford Primary School Encounters The Romans

This term in Otford Primary School, Year 3 are learning about the Ancient Romans. We heard how the Romans invaded Britain. Boudicca, a Celt (they were living in Britain when the Romans were around) tried her very hardest to take over Britain again after the Romans invaded.

We made Roman helmets out of papier mache and made our own shields and weapons out of cardboard and tin foil. We learnt about famous Romans like Emperor Augustus and Julius Caesar (the months of August and July were named after them.)

The best part of the Roman topic was our Roman day at school where we built a tiny (compared to the real ones)



amphitheatre with our chairs. We were pretending to be vicious Romans and we all got dressed up for this special occasion in real Roman costumes. We made messy clay decorations for the banquet in the afternoon and we played fantastic homemade Roman games. Everybody brought in scrumptious food, such as honey cakes (made from a real Roman recipe), grapes, strawberries, sugar mice and crepes.

A few days later we went on a school trip to Lullingstone Roman Villa. We did a fun quiz and watched an interesting film about the history of the villa.

We have really enjoyed doing the Romans for our topic this term.

Emma Clinton, Asteroid Class

Russell House School Performs Noah's Ark

After much rehearsal, learning songs and lines, and gathering of costumes and props, Forms 3 and 4 at Russell House performed Noah and the Ark in March. Here some of the children in Form 4 have written about the play.



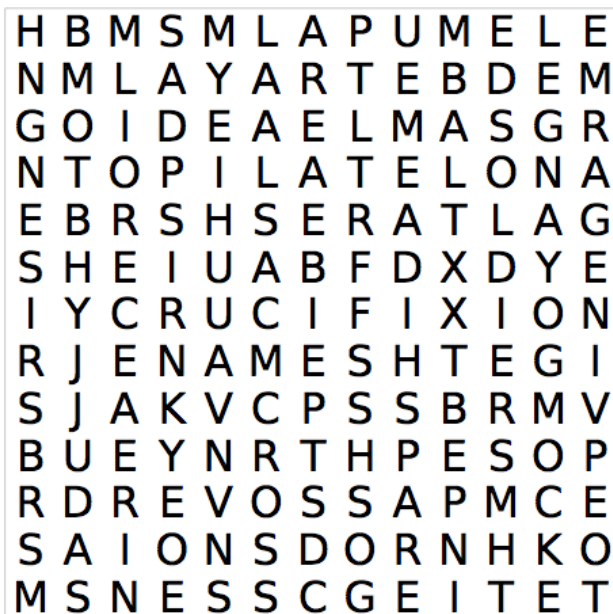
Noah's Ark is meant to be quite funny. In Noah's Ark, I'm called Rebecca. I'm one of the three Rs as Noah likes to call us. Me and my sisters in the play do all the

housework and sometimes we start to get angry with Noah. The reason we get angry is because he makes us do more work than he does. When the flood came, we were all surprised because when he first said there was going to be a flood, we didn't believe him and then the flood came – good thing we built the ark anyway. *Grace*

Noah's Ark is about a family who must do an amazing job which is making the great ark. There are jokes, a flood, some people who, let's just say they're a bit mean, and think Noah and his family are crazy. Now let's get to my part. I am playing Zerah, a party lover and someone who I would say is a bit mean. I drown in the flood and I am a bit cheeky. In short I am a naughty character. *George*

Naomi is mean and wicked so that's why God sends rain down and everyone dies but not Noah's family. They sail an Ark and in the beginning there are some jokes in it. Hannah is so weird, she says "Let's do our nails." And it is so hot there, all they want is rain and when the rain comes down, it turns into a flood. *Milla*

Children's Corner



A happy and blessed Easter to you! Easter is the most joyful day of the year for Christians. Christ has died for our sins. We are forgiven. Christ has risen! We are redeemed! We can look forward to an eternity in his joy! Hallelujah! The Good News of Jesus Christ is a message so simple that you can explain it to someone in a few minutes. It is so profound that for the rest of their lives they will be still be 'growing' in their Christian walk. Our word search this month is built around the theme of Easter.

Palms	Messiah	Praise	donkey	Bread	Body	Betrayal
False	mock	Pilate	Judas	Soldiers	Cross	Vinegar
tomb	angel	stone	risen	Mary	Triumphant	
Passover	Jerusalem	Gethsemane		Crucifixion		

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Who's who in the Parish Church . . .

VICAR: Richard Worssam 01959 523185

READERS: Peter Downing 01959 522327
Dawn Hallam 01959 526865
Bill Lattimer 01959 522058
Margaret Lidbetter 01959 524831
Brian Raynor 01959 523327
Betty Reed, 01959 523439

PASTORAL ASSISTANTS: Susan Reid 01959 523234
Margaret Lidbetter 01959 524831
Donna Worssam 01959 523185

HONORARY MINISTERS: David Casiot 01959 522588
Chris Reed 01959 523439

CHURCHWARDENS Derek Shilling 01959 522059
Janet Hunt 01959 523820

Organist and Choirmaster: Kevin Grafton 01732 452117

Sacristan: Tony Grogan 01959 523649

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Vice Chairman: Derek Shilling 01959 522059

Hon. Secretary: Susan Reid 01959 523234

Hon. Treasurer: Colin Fleetwood 01959 523582

Freewill Offering Fund: Brian Beacom 01959 524304

PARISH OFFICE

Monday to Friday 10.30am-12.30pm:

Susan Reid,

Clive Southgate

01959 523185

Email: st.bartholomews@otford.net

CHURCH HALL

Manager and Booking Sec: Robert Hunt 01959 523820

MAGAZINE

Editorial team: 01959 523185

Vicki Howie, Christeen Malan,

Clive Southgate, Richard Worssam

Advertisements: Deborah Vigis 01959 523331

st.bartholomews@otford.net

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For all groups contact Donna Worssam 01959 523185

YOUNG PEOPLE'S FELLOWSHIP

Contact: Dawn Hallam 01959 526865

OUTREACH

Chairman of Mission Committee:

Andrew Hill 01732 469538

BELLRINGERS:

The Tower Captain: Bobbie Fairclough 01959 522696

Secretary: Janet Whitehead 01959 524088

Practice night: Thursday 7.45-9.15pm

CHURCH COUNCIL

The Vicar and Churchwardens, Gordon Aylward, Sam Barnett, Joan Beacom, Chris Bishop, David Crawley, Russell Edwards, Colin Fleetwood, Dawn Hallam, Mark Holmes, Vicki Howie, Bill Lattimer, Heather Stanley, Margie Torry, Steve Vigis,
Ex-Officio (Deanery Synod): Margaret Lidbetter, Pat Mills, Susan Reid.