

St Bartholomew's Church Otford

Parish News



October 2020

www.stbartholomews.co.uk

£1

SERVICES AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

	8am	10am
4th October	Holy Communion	Harvest All Together Worship
11th October	Holy Communion	Holy Communion
18th October	Holy Communion	Morning Worship
25th October	Holy Communion	Holy Communion

Weekly services are now being held in church on Sunday at 8am and 10am. Numbers are limited so please contact the church office, should you wish to attend, by the Thursday before the service.

A message for the young people is still being posted to the church website.

There is also a Wednesday BCP Holy Communion service at 10am. Again numbers are limited so please book with the church office by Monday should you wish to attend.

Revd David's day off: Tuesday

Magazine copy date: 10th of the month prior to publication

COVER PHOTO: Institution, Induction and Installation of Revd. David Guest
pictured with the Bishop of Tonbridge

Magazine printed by Silver Pines Services, Magazine No. 10 Volume 90

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

Celebrate the Bible

We come to the part of the year when many Sundays have a special theme: we are keeping Harvest this month and next month we will mark All Saints, Remembrance, Christ the King and Advent. The last Sunday of October is often kept by churches as Bible Sunday, and we will be focussing on that theme ourselves at our services on October 25th.

It is all too easy simply to read and study the Bible as an academic exercise, but there are plenty of places in its pages where we are reminded that God's word 'revives the soul'. That does not mean just the spiritual part of us – but the whole of us; as Psalm 19.7 puts it, 'it gives new strength'.

Jesus picks up this image in John 4 when he speaks of living water: not only fresh – like a spring – and so life sustaining and giving, but also a spring in us. This is about a God-given joyful vitality that overflows from us to others.

God's Word revives us, it opens our eyes to see ourselves and our world more clearly, and leads us on to God's forgiveness - three great reasons why we should be leaping up and down with excitement and celebration that God has provided us with Scripture.

Of course we must remember not just to celebrate the Bible on one Sunday a year, nor should we just read it, but we must also encourage people to find ways to put the Bible into action.

When the Psalmists talk about keeping God's Word, it doesn't mean they had God's laws on a scroll in the cupboard for safety. Nor do they mean they have learnt all these laws off by heart

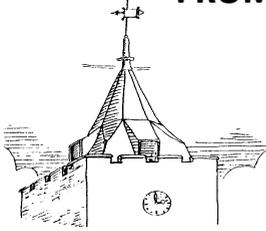
– although knowing the Bible well is a great advantage. They don't mean they beat other people up with their knowledge of the Bible! No, they mean they have soaked themselves in God's ways and, in every way possible, they put these into practice. As Psalm 19.8 says, 'Those who obey them are happy'.

So let us celebrate the Bible and try to live out its words in our daily lives – as the prayer for the day reminds us, hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them. Its message revives us; gives us a new way of seeing the whole of life and brings us deep and freeing forgiveness. Read, study, reflect and ensure you pass it on. As the psalmist's words bless us and as the letter to Colossians encourages us, let us bless other people with the words and deeds from the Bible.

Revd David



FROM ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH



CHURCH OPENING FOR PRAYER

The church is open daily from 9.30am-3pm for private prayer. Please follow the directions given in the entrance lobby and use the red chairs in the side chapel.

SERVICES FROM ST BART'S

We are pleased to say that we are now able to offer two Sunday morning services in church each week; 8am Holy Communion and a 10am service. There is also Holy Communion at 10am on a Wednesday. We are strictly limited on numbers at our services due to social distancing. If you would like to attend please apply to the church office from Monday-Thursday for a Sunday service or Thursday-Monday for a Wednesday service by email; st.bartholomews@otford.net or phone 01959 523185. Confirmation of your place will be sent out on Fridays for Sunday services.

We are also live streaming our 10am Sunday morning service so, if you are unsuccessful in getting a seat in church, you can watch from home or at a time that suits your family circumstances. You can find the service on our website.

Things to note about attending services in church:

- It would be appreciated if all would complete a Test and Trace form when or before they attend a service

- Face coverings should be worn throughout the service
- At present no singing is permitted during the service, but you may hum the hymns

There are many other online resources provided by the Church of England at www.churchofengland.org

RECIPE BOOK

We are hoping to publish a St Bart's recipe book in time for Christmas to help with church funds.

If anyone has any favourite recipes -old or new- and would like to contribute please make the dish, photograph it and send a copy of the recipe with photo to The Church Office by the 31st October. If you wish to be acknowledged in the book please indicate. A short sentence or two about the recipe would add further interest.

Enjoy your cooking!

LOAVES AND FISHES

We would like to thank all those who have donated to the food bank during the Covid-19 crisis. These donations have been essential to the work of Loaves and Fishes.

FIRST STEPS

First Steps at Otford Methodist Church is not able to resume meeting yet until all the necessary safeguards are in place. We will keep you informed as to when we will be re-opening.

MONTHLY MEDITATION - OCTOBER

Weathering the storm

As I write this, Covid-9 infection rates seem to be rising and after a summer where we all relaxed a bit it looks as if we will need to re-raise our guards and face again the uncertain storms of the pandemic.

A friend recently sent me this analogy – while we are all facing the same storm, we are doing so in different boats. I have been using this boat analogy a lot this week (after hearing it from @janewundersitz) to explain why some people are weathering the current crisis better than others...

“We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm.” That summation of our current situation originally came from Damian Barr (the illustration is by Barbara Kelley), who suggested that some of us will sail through this pandemic with our health and jobs intact, yet others will lose one or both, or potentially more.

So if you’re wondering why others are fairing better or worse than you at the moment, perhaps it’s worth considering what type of boat they are in...

Some of us have yachts, others are in canoes. Some have a substantial crew on board, others are rowing alone. Some have life jackets such as strong relationships or good health while others don’t even have a working rudder. And while some of us will sail though this next storm with our jobs and health intact others will lose one or both or more. So when we see someone struggling, it’s worth thinking what sort of boat they have to help them sail through the storm – and what sort of help we can give them.

There is a story told in both Luke and Matthew’s gospel about the disciples weathering a storm.

Here it is from Luke 8:22-25

Jesus Calms the Storm

²² One day Jesus said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side of the lake.” So they got into a boat and set out. ²³ As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.

²⁴ The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, we’re going to drown!”

He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm.

²⁵ “Where is your faith?” he asked his disciples.

In fear and amazement they asked one another, “Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.”

I certainly have times when my faith gets buffeted by the squalls of life, and I find it comforting that even the disciples had crises of faith, times when they didn’t believe in Jesus’ power. They had already seen him perform miracles of healing, listened to his teaching and seen the effect he had on the hundreds of people who came to listen to him. Yet in their little storm-tossed fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee they were afraid and didn’t believe that Jesus would keep them safe. But He did and He will be in our storm-tossed boat as well if we ask him in.

You are our lifebelt, Lord, through the storms of life. When our faith falters, help us to trust you as our refuge and strength. When we are anxious, uncertain and afraid, calm us, Lord, as you calmed the storm. Amen



Susanne Beard

INSTITUTION, INDUCTION AND INSTALLATION

Looking at the list of incumbents at the back of church from 1155-1271 there were six rectors recorded. From 1271-1868 the benefice was united with Shoreham and from 1868-2019 10 vicars were recorded. A new chapter began on Wednesday, 26th August when Revd. David Andrew Guest was inducted and installed as Vicar of Otford. It was totally different to all other induction services that had taken place. Only thirty people were present (mostly officials). There were no hymns, no service of Holy Communion and no gathering afterwards. Fortunately, due to the website, parishioners were able to watch the service live in their homes.

Those 'on stage' taking the service were the Right Reverend Simon Burton-Jones, Bishop of Tonbridge, the Venerable Julie Conalty, Archdeacon of Tonbridge, and the Area Dean, the Reverend Tim Hatwell. The Bishop of Tonbridge reminded the incumbent-designate of his original promises made at his ordination, declaration of oaths and anointing. The Archdeacon of Tonbridge and churchwardens led Revd. David to the main door to place his hand upon the handle and to present him with the keys of the church. He was then led to the bell tower where he tolled the bell to indicate his taking up the role of the care of the building and the spiritual life of the church. The churchwardens then led the new incumbent to his stall and finally to the pulpit where he was invited to begin his ministry by leading the prayers of the people. Later the Area Dean invited the whole congregation to welcome the new incumbent with applause.

The two lessons were read by Derek Shilling (Vice Chair of the PCC) and Revd. John Ritson (Minister of Otford Methodist Church).

Revd. David thanked those on the PCC, the Ministry Team, and others who had enabled the spiritual life of the church to continue during the interregnum and lock down; he also extended thanks to Kevin Grafton, the organist; to members of his family who were present and to everyone for welcoming him to 'this wonderful new parish'.

The procession left the church to a rendition of the hymn requested by Revd. David 'Here I am Lord', one of his favourites!

I am sure we all wish him our love and prayers as he begins his new ministry among the people of Otford.

Susan Reid



David with the Churchwardens

MISSION MATTERS - THE BIBLE SOCIETY

Egypt tops list as 3.7 million Scriptures given to children last year

Bible Society teams worldwide provided almost 3.7 million Scripture items for children last year thanks to the generous support of people like you. Our giving meant over 1.1 million children's Scriptures were distributed in Egypt alone. This is the largest number for one nation, in a place where ministry with young people is a top priority. Through festivals, competitions and quizzes, the Bible Society of Egypt engages with hundreds of thousands of children each year. Ten-year-old Mario took part in a Bible Society quiz in Egypt, and left the event with a passion for God's word as well as a new remote controlled car. "Around 150 kids in our Sunday school participated in the quiz on Matthew," said Mario. "We studied so hard, every day for a month, but only 15 came to the final competition. This is my first time attending such a big party. And it was the first time for me to stand in front of more than 1,000 people to answer the quiz!"



Mario and two other prize-winners after a Bible quiz on the book of Matthew.

Winning the car was good, but Mario revealed something even more important, "After the competition, I started to read the Bible every day. Now I pretend I have another competition to study for, and my Mum and I spend time together reading the new Bible I received," he said.

Children under 15 make up just over a quarter of the world's population (1.9 billion children) and thanks to your generosity, more and more children in Egypt and elsewhere are increasingly engaging with God's word. Dr Ehab Tanas, Director of Sales and Church Relations in Egypt said one third of the Egyptian population is 14 years old or younger, so there are about 5 million Christian children who need to be served. Children are the future of the Church. His colleague, Lois, added, "We are absolutely confident that when the word of God is sown in the hearts of children, their lives will be different and they will shine."

Brazil came second after Egypt with about 500,000 Scriptures distributed to children, according to the results of a Bible Society survey released 30 July. And 1.3 million Scriptures were provided in Africa, where children under 15 account for around 40 per cent of the population.



SILENT AUCTION

Silent “Promises” Auction – Time, Talents, Gifts!



We are planning to hold a Silent Auction to raise money for church funds.

This will enable us to raise money whilst still observing social distancing rules in the current climate and is a great opportunity for

you to use your own personal gifts and talents.

Please give some thought as to what you can offer as a “promise” that anyone can then bid for by means of a sealed silent bid. Your “promise” will be awarded to the highest bidder.

This could be giving some of your time, or your talents, or actual gifts. Some may be good for Christmas present ideas too! E.g.

2 hours ironing or gardening, dog walking, babysitting, baking a cake or making a pudding, knitting a jumper or actual items such as a hamper, bottles of wine, chocolates etc.. .

How it Works

By 20th October - please submit your “promise” to Jo Chandler at jo.chandler@live.co.uk or by phone on 07703 707309 or via the church office or by using the contact form on the church website. If you require a reserve price for your “promise” please make sure you include this.

1st November - a full catalogue of “promises” will be published for all to view. We will list your name against your “promise” unless you specify you do not want us to.

Then the bidding starts!

1st-15th November – everyone has the opportunity to place their own silent bid for “promises” of their choice. Please submit your bid in writing to jo.chandler@live.co.uk or by placing your bid in a sealed envelope and handing it into the church office. We will require your name, contact details, the item number and the amount you wish to bid. If you are interested in more than one item, please submit each one separately. Please write the item number on the outside of your envelope.

16th November – “promises” without bids or those with lots of bids will be published again for any final bids to be placed.

30th November - bids will be opened and the “promise” awarded to the highest bidder.

1-8th December - winners will be notified with details of how to pay via the church office and who to contact to claim their item. The giver of the item will also be advised how much their item went for and who will be in contact with them to claim it. You have 6 months to claim your “promise”.

We look forward to receiving your offers of time, talents and gifts as an opportunity for fund-raising for church funds. If you would like further information or have any questions, please contact me - Jo Chandler on 07703 797 039. Thank you for your support.

SATURDAY STALLS



Cakes, jams, chutneys, crumbles, fresh produce, seaside pictures, beautifully turned wooden items, needlework and so much more have been for sale on a Saturday morning outside the Church Hall. As we were unable to hold the Church Summer

Fair, and quite unlikely to be able to hold the Christmas Fair, this year we felt it would be great to have mini fairs, with just two stalls, each Saturday morning. We have been amazed at the footfall in Otford on a Saturday morning but then with football training in the mornings and football matches in the afternoons, at the recreation ground, as well as being the kind of village people coming down from London do enjoy visiting, it is not surprising. We have had a great team of people with some putting up the gazebo, helping to set up and returning at lunchtime to help take down the gazebos and

put everything away. Others have volunteered to take it in turns to run the stalls whilst others still have been busy cooking, baking, growing, sewing, making, and so on. We are obviously also very grateful to those of you who have faithfully visited and bought each Saturday. The first Saturday was one of the hottest days of the year, another Saturday it rained the whole morning but the stall still sold out and we have also had a very windy morning! The effort has all been worth it as we have, at time of writing, taken £2,413 and have been able to claim Gift Aid on some of the items donated bringing the total to just over £2,800, and we still have one more stall to go!

It has been a great way to see people again and be able to chat whilst observing social distancing.

We are keeping a watch on government guidelines in relation to the Christmas Market, so watch this space for developments or keep an eye on the church website www.stbartholomews.co.uk

Mags Southgate



FAITH IN THE FAMILY...

October: Colours of autumn



**Hey, Joseph, what does it mean?
(Genesis 41)**

One night, Pharaoh had the weirdest dream. He was standing by the Nile (that's a famous river) when out of the water came seven cows, all shiny and fat, and they grazed among the reeds. Moo! After them came seven more cows, all ugly and thin, to shiver on the riverbank. And the ugly, thin ones ate up the shiny, fat ones! Moo! That's when Pharaoh woke up!

He soon fell asleep again and had a second dream. Seven ears of corn, all healthy and good, were growing on a single stalk. After them, seven more ears of corn sprouted, all thin and scorched by the east wind. And the thin ears of corn swallowed up the seven healthy, good ears. Gulp! Pharaoh woke with a start. Phew! It was just a dream.



But in the morning, these dreams really got to him. So he sent for all the wise men of Egypt. Sadly they weren't wise enough to tell him what his dreams meant.

Then the chief cupbearer (not the under cupbearer) remembered a handsome chap he'd met in prison, one Joseph, who could interpret dreams reliably. So Joseph was brought up from the dungeon and (after a wash and brush up) he bowed before Pharaoh.

"So, Joseph, I hear you can tell the meaning of dreams," said Pharaoh.

"Not *me*, exactly," said Joseph with unusual modesty. "But tell me your dreams and God will answer through me."

Pharaoh was eager to get them off his chest. "You see, I was standing on the bank of the Nile when . . ." and he poured out the full crazy story. Remember it . . . ?

"Aha!" exclaimed Joseph. "Both dreams mean the same thing! God is telling you loud and clear that there are going to be seven years of great abundance in Egypt – amazing harvests – followed by seven years of shortage – a famine so bad that no-one will remember the good times.

"If I were you, I'd appoint someone, ahem, *special* to collect the excess grain during the good years and store it all up for the bad ones."

"Hmm, good plan!" said Pharaoh, looking at Joseph, "and who could be better than you?"

So Pharaoh gave Joseph a right royal makeover (signet ring, linen robes, gold chain, not to mention the chariot) and put him in charge of Egypt. Not a grasshopper was to chirp without his say-so. Then Joseph rode far and wide carrying out God's plan. During the plentiful years, he stored up heaps of grain as big as sand dunes. And when the famine came, Joseph flung open the storehouses . . . AND THERE WAS FOOD!

The Bible story: This is taken from the story of Joseph – he of the amazing technicolour dreamcoat! As a young boy, and his father's favourite, Joseph had annoyed his older brothers by telling them of dreams he'd had which showed they would all eventually bow down before him! The jealous brothers sold him into slavery in Egypt where the clever and

handsome young man was wrongly accused of an affair with the wife of the captain of the guard and thrown into prison. All his hopes were dashed, it seemed. But his talent for interpreting dreams proved useful with fellow prisoners and led to his release . . . God was with Joseph and his plans for him could not be derailed!

As parents, we get upset and worried when things are difficult for our children, such as the recent break in their education, or rejection from a chosen university course. But the story of Joseph reminds us that God will bring his plans for them to fruition. We can rest assured that God has wonderful plans for every one of our children's lives.

Read the Bible story as a family together.

I wonder if you can remember Pharaoh's two dreams

I wonder what *you* thought they meant

I wonder if you can remember *your* dreams.
Any funny ones?

I wonder what each person's own dreams are for their future

Dream up a coat for Joseph

You will need: white paper, crayons, felt tips



When Joseph was small, his father gave him a very special coat. Cut out a semi-circle of paper for each person. Design a beautiful robe that includes patterns and borders. It could be inspired by:

Items from the dreams, such as cows, bulrushes, fish, ears of corn, sheaves, stars, a sun and moon (see also Genesis 37: 1-11)

Autumn treasures, such as acorns, leaf shapes, squirrels, blackberries

Rich autumn colours – look at trees, bushes, berries and flowers

You could draw a head and neck for Joseph on separate paper and tape to the back of the coat.

Write your own autumn haiku: Here is an example to follow,

Cool air swirling fast (5 syllables)
Whispering to scarlet leaves: (7 syllables)
'Join this mellow dance' (5 syllables)

Catch a falling leaf

On a family walk in the woods, collect some autumn treasures and scuff through piles of fallen leaves. Set up a family competition to see how many leaves you can each catch! You will soon notice that leaves don't fall straight to the ground, but tease you by zigzagging, looping and floating their way down. Chat about how our lives can sometimes seem to go in all sorts of unexpected directions – and yet God is still there with us.



For young children: Look out for the picture book *Love you always* by Frances Stickley and Migy Blanco (Nosy Crow). The leaves are changing colour around little Hoglet. Would his mummy love him more if *he* changed too? This is a seasonal story about the never-ending love between a parent and child.

Prayer

Thank God that he has a purpose for each one of us and ask him to help us find out what that might be.

Vicki Howie



EVENTS, PEOPLE AND PLACES FROM OTFORD'S PAST

Otford Village School part 3.

Richard Hoff. School head teacher from 1878 - 1919



One of the longest-serving head teachers at Otford school was Richard Hoff (1855-1934), who was born in Portland, Dorset. He was also organist of Otford Church from 1880 and parish clerk. Hoff trained as a teacher at St Marks College, Chelsea which had been founded by

the Anglican National Society in 1840 and subsequently (in 1926) merged with St John's College (originally Battersea College), founded in 1838. The merged colleges survive as the University of St Mark & St John in Plymouth. The 1871 Census records Hoff as being resident at the College at that time, and the student lists in the College archives show him as present in 1874-75. This may well mean that he was a 'pupil-teacher' at the Practising School before taking up his teacher training certificate, so that he was receiving pre-course training first. Hoff undoubtedly also benefitted from the flourishing musical teaching at the College, involving such well-known musicians of the day as John Hullah, Thomas Helmore and Sir John Stainer. According to Bernarr Rainbow, a subsequent Director of Music at the merged colleges, 'more than any other single event, the adoption of daily choral services at St Mark's College was to be responsible for the consistent growth of the

Choral Revival throughout the whole country.'

Hoff became headmaster at Otford in 1878 at the astonishingly young age of 23 and retired in 1919 after over forty years of teaching in Otford. It cannot have been an easy job. By the late 1880s average school attendance was 91 and by 1904 there were 162 pupils on the school registers. The school had accommodation for up to 186 pupils. In the confines of the comparatively small size of the school building conditions must have been difficult and pupil attendance would have been intermittent since many of the children would also have had home and local agricultural employment responsibilities. School attendance up to the age of 11 years was not compulsory until the 1890s. The effects of school closure as a result of illness would also have had an impact.

In addition to Richard Hoff there were a few other female staff. By the 1880s he had one assistant, Elizabeth Parish (1850-1925), his second wife. By 1904 Elizabeth was the assistant teacher and their daughter Beatrice Ethel (born in 1886) was a probationer teacher. At the time they were supported by two others, Bessie Oates and Fanny Payne both of whom lived in the immediate vicinity of the school.

There is some evidence the school was not particularly highly regarded by the Schools' Inspectorate (forerunner of today's Ofsted, *Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills*) in summer 1909. The report is appended to the 1909 School logbook and the inspector seems to have been less than impressed. The report concluded 'it still remains impossible to regard the general condition of the school as satisfactory.' The staff's achievements (or lack thereof) in discipline were criticised as were the children's efforts in the '3 Rs.' Nothing

was praised, even allowing for the closure of the school for several months in early 1909 because of outbreaks of infectious disease.

Myfanwy Thomas, daughter of poet Edward Thomas, who was living across the road in Forge Cottage towards the end of Hoff's career in Otford suggested that the school had a rather decrepit look. In her account of life in Otford (published in 1982) she remembered the school having streaky windows with 'jars of snakes pickled in methylated spirit, the liquid cloudy and grey with disintegrating scales from the limp inmates' on the window sills. Her one-line portrait of Hoff, describes him as wearing a 'stained black suit and soiled celluloid collar ... personifying Mr Squeers.' (The disreputable teacher in Dickens' *Nicholas Nickleby*).

Hoff's family lived in the adjacent School House (now the Parish Council office and Heritage Centre) until his retirement after which they moved to the corner of Pickmoss apparently for

much of the rest of their lives, Elizabeth Hoff died in 1925 and Richard lived alone and ultimately at 2 Willow Terrace until his death in 1934. Their daughter Beatrice married and moved away. School house remained empty for several years after 1919 until a new headmaster Harry Halstead Smart arrived with his family in 1923. He was still living there in 1939.

If you wish to receive the 'History and Heritage Newsletter', free by email, or if you have any memories of the school in more recent years please do let me know by email at: info@otfordhistoricalsociety.co.uk

With grateful thanks to Kevin Grafton, Organist and Choirmaster at St Bartholomew's Church, for providing additional information about Richard Hoff and to Ed Thompson for the illustrations.

Alan Williams



Above: Richard Hoff and some of the school pupils. Though undated the photograph was probably taken around the turn of the twentieth century. The children appear to be aged about 10-11 years and no-one looks particularly happy. School uniforms in state and church schools were introduced much later.

OCTOBER WALK

A flatter walk this month of just over three and a half miles offering the opportunity to enjoy the early autumn colours and which, later on, provides beautiful views of Otford to the east.

This walk follows well-trodden footpaths and some public roads. There are no big hills and there is the option to shorten the route should you wish.

The starting point is outside Yvonne's shop in Telston Lane.

With Yvonne's shop on your right walk along Telston Lane. Just past Hale Lane where Telston Lane narrows to a single track, continue ahead following the yellow arrow on a wooden post. Soon a large green area will open up to your right with views of the Downs beyond.

Stay on the lane as it curves right then ascends past New Barn Farm Cottages on your right and a number of houses on your left. When the lane ends, proceed ahead along the footpath until you cross the railway line which is concealed

between steep banks below. Immediately after this, you will see a wooden signboard indicating Chipstead straight on and Riverhead to your left.



Continue ahead in the Chipstead direction whilst enjoying the autumn colours of the trees in the



distance. Cross the field then follow the yellow arrow to go between trees in a wooded area where fungi. Grow.

Emerging from the trees you will see houses in Dunton Green ahead of you. Carry on in that direction, passing fields where horses often graze, and Donnington Manor Hotel, to arrive at the road. Turn left, go past the Rose and Crown on your right and then, at the road junction, turn left along London Road. When you come to the former St John's Church (now housing Eland's Veterinary Surgery) on your right, look for a public footpath sign on your left and follow it along the drive to Broughton House.



On reaching Broughton Carriage House on your left, go through the green metal pedestrian gate to your right to access an enclosed leafy footpath which ascends to reach a field.

Cross the field – the footpath is visible going slightly to the left – until you reach a T-junction with the Darent Valley Path (DVP) which runs alongside the sunken railway line.

Note - If you want a shorter walk, you can now turn left and follow the DVP, beside the sunken railway line, back to the Chipstead /Riverhead notice board (see above) where you will turn right to retrace your steps along Telston Lane.

To continue, turn sharply right onto the DVP and go downhill, past fields and trees, always staying close to the railway and following yellow arrows for the DVP, eventually descending on a tarmac



lane to pass under the M26. About 40 yards further on, leave the tarmac lane to go left onto a footpath next to the railway line then, at the bottom of the slope, turn sharply left to

cross under the railway bridge and enter a field where sheep often graze. Follow the footpath, which is clearly visible veering diagonally left then following the line of the fence, to climb a stile to join Rye Lane.

The walk now leaves the DVP – go left along Rye Lane and under the motorway bridge. Before long there are pleasing views of the North Downs to the east. Continue ahead to reach a big bend in the road to the left. Immediately ahead you will see a house called Homelands - follow the yellow arrow on its right to join the footpath which goes tightly between two fences.

Keeping a red post box to your left, cross the driveway of a house to arrive at a meadow (grazing sheep, SR55) from where there is a beautiful view of the centre and eastern end of Otford with the tower of St Bart’s Church clearly visible at its heart.

Continue straight ahead, through a wooden gate dividing the fields, and on along the well walked path to cross a stile and re-join Rye Lane.

Go past the entrance to The Charne then, opposite Ryecroft Road, follow the footpath sign on your right to go down a stony private road (Broughton Road) running parallel to Rye

Lane. This soon becomes a footpath leading out to Pilgrims Way West.

To return to the starting point, turn left onto Pilgrims Way West and continue ahead, taking the first turning on the left – Telston Lane – and walk along here to complete your circular route. Alternatively you can turn left on Rye Lane for a short distance then turn right and weave your way through Willow Park, which will bring you out very close to Yvonne’s shop.

Christeen Malan



RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Coffee Walnut Sponge

Ingredients:

- 110g (4 oz) plain white flour
- 110g (4 oz) plain wholemeal flour
- 4 level teaspoons baking powder
- 225g (8oz) soft margarine/baking spread
- 225g (8oz) soft brown sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 4 heaped teaspoons instant coffee
- 2 dessertspoons boiling water
- 75g (3 oz) chopped walnuts

For the icing –

- 150g (5oz) softened butter
- 300g (10 oz) icing sugar
- 3 level teaspoons instant coffee mixed with one dessertspoon of boiling water
- 110g (4 oz) walnut halves

Pre-heat the oven to 180 deg/ Fan 160 deg.

Grease and base line two round 8” sandwich tins with non-stick baking parchment.

Mix the instant coffee with the boiling water then add it along with all the other ingredients to the electric mixer bowl. Beat until well blended.

Divide the mixture evenly between the two tins spreading it to the edges.

Bake for 25-30 minutes until well risen and springy to the touch.

After a few minutes run a knife round the edge of each tin to loosen the cakes before turning them out onto a cooling rack.

Icing

Cream the butter and icing sugar until light and smooth. Gradually add the coffee solution and mix well. Add a bit more icing sugar if necessary.

When the cakes are cold sandwich together with the icing and decorate with the walnut halves.

Christeen Malan



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?... AMY BARKER (CHESWICK)

Some of my earliest memories are of being part of the St Bart's family, for instance Sunday School run by Mrs Bunch in the church hall (that makes me feel very old!) and later on becoming a Sunday School helper when Sylvia Grafton was leader. That was my first foray into supporting children's ministry and something I've come back to more recently.

I became a Christian in my early teens and loved being part of the Young People's Fellowship (YPF). I have very fond memories of great experiences like Spring Harvest (horrible chalets and appearing on *Songs of Praise*) and Greenbelt (including waking one year to find tent-carnage following a major storm that I had slept through). Those experiences, as well as the fellowship and support from each other and our leaders, especially 'Granny' Anne Fleetwood, helped us all to grow in our Christian faith. I am privileged to still be in touch with some of that lovely crowd, where I made friends for life. When my mum died a few years ago, it was a real blessing to see so many YPF faces at her celebration service.

After studying history at university, I moved to London to work for a church-based housing association. I felt, and still feel, that the injustice and exclusion created by homelessness is unacceptable and I have continued to work in social housing as a result. I'm now a director for a housing association; responsible for providing housing, support services, help into employment and homelessness-prevention services in Surrey and Sussex.

Following some travelling and working overseas, my husband Julian and I settled in Surrey. We have wonderful 14 year-old twin boys. Although I'd been christened and confirmed at St Bart's, I took the step to be baptised by full immersion in 2007. We're members of Reigate Baptist Church, where for several years I served as part of our children's ministry. Our church family has grown to the extent that we now have a full time children's pastor, which is amazing. Lockdown has been hard for all churches and we have missed face-to-face fellowship. This experience will help us appreciate that even more as we start to be able to meet again.

My dad still plays an active role in Otford life and it still feels like home when I come back to the village; especially when I see familiar faces and hear news of those I remember. I'm drawn to end with a reminder for us all to think of and take forward. Colossians 2:6 (NIV) 'So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him'.



WELCOME WILDLIFE INTO YOUR GARDEN



October 2020

October is an interesting month, sometimes we have a really warm spell known as Indian summer. It is the month of colour as the trees' green leaves of summer now change to orange, yellow, deep red, copper and brown. As winter approaches lower ground temperatures make it harder for root systems to extract water from the soil. Trees shed their leaves for self protection as they prepare for strong winds, frost and sometimes, snow. Gold and red berries appear on holly, rowen, whitebeam, yew, and many shrubs. Mistletoe boasts white berries which attract birds, as do purple elderberries and the last remaining blackberries. Birds and animals certainly love October. Hazelnuts, acorns, and sweet chestnuts are enjoyed by squirrels, mice and badgers and hidden for future feasts. Badgers and foxes also enjoy plums and apples.

Many gardens in Otford are visited by hedgehogs. They will now be looking for a place to hibernate; log piles are perfect for their homes, or you can buy or make one. Habitat is a major issue, they travel one mile a night and so it is kind of us, if we can, to leave a gap at the bottom of a fence so they can travel from garden to garden. If you are aware that they visit your garden please leave a dish of water and maybe a little cat food (without grain) and definitely no sunflower seeds. They make quite a noise when eating. Sadly they are now on the endangered list.

Squirrels are inclined to visit gardens in autumn in search of nuts, fruits and seeds which they may hoard for the winter by burying them. In the weeks between August and November, their thin summer coat is replaced by a thicker, more luxuriant one, salt and pepper in appearance and

their tails are more bushy. They are very opportunistic and can hang upside down to feed from a bird feeder!

Starlings born in Poland, Norway, Estonia or Finland arrive in England to join the thousands of starlings that live in this country. They fly back to their homelands for the summer to breed and rear their young. They seem to enjoy the centre and west of our village, rather than the Downs.

It is the time for early morning mists and dew which make spiders webs sparkle in hedges and tall grass. Sometimes overnight the damp grass of a lawn becomes speckled with fungi forming rings or clusters. When walking in woodland you can see all sorts of different shapes and colours. A spectacular one is the red, white speckled, fly agaric, which is highly poisonous. Do not touch it! Fungi help to break down organic debris adding nutrients to the soil.

If you do have a bonfire whilst gardening, please check there are no hibernating creatures within the pile.

October is the time to enjoy playing Conkers!

Elizabeth Ward



DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS

Major Shake-Up to Planning Laws

Over the last few months you will have seen much in the news about the major overhaul to the planning system. Part of this shake-up includes significant changes to permitted development rights which came into force at the beginning of September.

Under the new classification for different uses of property, the amendment to the Use Class means that owners and developers will be able to convert a wider range of commercial premises, such as offices, cafes, or shops, into homes without the need for planning permission from the Local Planning Authority (Sevenoaks District Council in our case). Homeowners will now be able to build larger extensions under permitted development without planning permission and planning fees, making it cheaper and easier to extend your home as well as speeding up the process to allow you to enlarge your home more quickly.

One of the more contentious new rules recently introduced is that it will now be possible to extend upwards, by up to two storeys, without the need for planning permission. This would mean up to two additional storeys in the case of an existing dwelling house consisting of two or more storeys and one additional storey for a single-storey dwelling. This change to permitted development rights does not apply to conservation areas, listed buildings and areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONB's). The new rules also only apply to houses constructed between 1st July 1948 and 28th October 2018. This means for much of Otford many of the new permitted development laws will not apply.

Other changes designed to help boost the number of homes built, mean that it will no longer be necessary to apply for planning permission to demolish commercial buildings to be replaced by residential properties within the footprint of the existing building. This rule only applies to old buildings that were constructed prior to the 31 December 1999 and will not apply to buildings that are considered, 'essential to the lifeblood of communities', with pubs, libraries and village shops listed in this category.

The new permitted development rights are subject to a myriad of conditions and limitations and will require prior approval from Sevenoaks District Council before building works can take place. This allows the Council to consider the proposals and their likely impact with regard to amenity, transport, and highways, request further details and to confirm that specified parts of a development are acceptable before work commences.

The new rules are already in force and will apply to applications received by the District Council from the 1st September 2020.

The District Council's Planning Portal has not been updated with the recent changes as some of the new planning laws are being legally challenged. Currently the best advice is to speak to your planning consultant, or alternatively, please do get in touch.

Cllr Irene Roy
cllr.roy@sevenoaks.gov.uk
Tel: 01959 525610



NEWS FROM OTFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Back to School

The gates of Otford Primary opened on Thursday 3rd September to welcome pupils to the new academic year. But this was not a normal first day, half the school had not set foot inside these gates for more than 5 months! You could feel the anticipation building as you approached the school. Things looked slightly different right from the start, with staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion in the playground. Children and parents were asked to form a socially distanced queue and then walk round a one way system, dropping off their child as they reached the playground. No chatting!!

Inside the school, teachers have worked hard to re-arrange class rooms and facilities to ensure that each year group are able to remain together as a 'bubble' and to ensure 'bubbles' do not mix. To avoid this, the children have different places and times to

play and separate lunch breaks. A huge job to mastermind over the summer holidays.

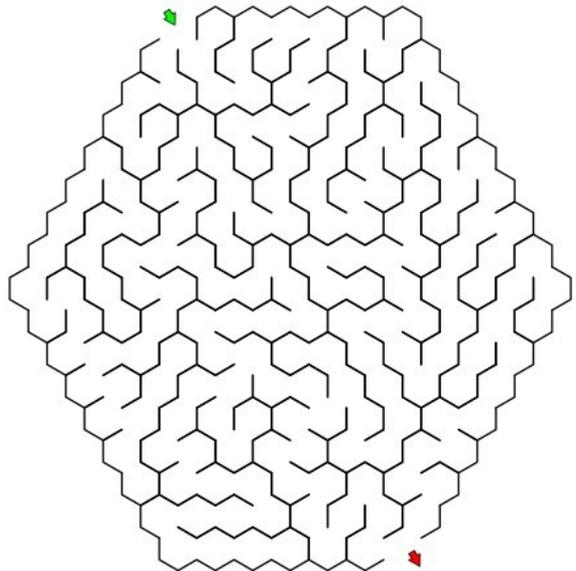
Classes are seated in rows rather than groups so that they are all looking forward and group work is minimised. A very different way of learning for some of the younger children particularly.

Regular handwashing is encouraged and there are hand sanitisers in every building. The children however have so far taken it all in their stride, anxious to see their friends and teachers and keen to get back to 'normality', or at least the new normality.

Louise Brown



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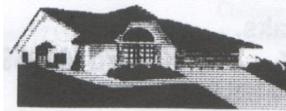
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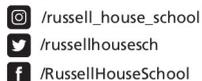
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