

St Bartholomew's Church Otford

Parish News



July/ August 2020

www.stbartholomews.co.uk

£1

In relation to COVID-19, care should be taken when handling material delivered through your door.

SERVICES AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

All services and church meetings (other than those being held online) have been suspended until further notice.

A Sunday service and a message for the young people is being posted to the church website www.stbartholomews.co.uk each week.

There are other helpful resources on the website too, including: Prayer for the week, Notice Sheet, Prayer Diary, Order of Morning and Night Prayer and this magazine should you wish to read it online.

Please look at the website if you can.

We hope you will enjoy reading this month's magazine. If you have comments about, or suggestions for, the magazine please let us know—we'd love to hear from you. *The Editors*

Cover photo: Zoom Coffee

If you would like to join us for Zoom coffee, 11am on a Sunday, please let the Church Office know st.bartholomews@otford.net

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READER'S REFLECTION



Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher, once said that you can never step in the same river twice.

He was, in a nut shell, making an observation of our existence in this world: nothing remains the same, everything changes, nothing is constant. This seemingly simple observation, and quite obvious to us today, is the basis of so many scientific theories which we take for granted. But do we? We often say we do not like change. For some change is quite difficult to handle and for some even a sign of mental health issues. We don't like change for change's sake. Yet the last couple of years has brought more changes to our existence than we could have ever thought possible and we are being forced to change the way we live in so many ways. Let's be honest, Brexit came as a shock to many of us. What was seen as a very good idea years ago became unsavoury to many and we are having to get used to the idea that we will no longer be Europeans, politically. We were then made aware of the environmental impact of plastic and other ways in which we are polluting our world, in some ways irretrievably. Shamed into thinking seriously about how we shop, how much energy we use, what we throw away, by a teenager. Then came COVID, quicker than we all were ready for; at least with Brexit we were going to have 2 years

to get used to the idea. But COVID has come upon us with such speed and yet it is demanding great patience of us. And now we are encouraged to really think about our attitude, and status, towards all humans and to stand alongside our brothers and sisters regardless of race or ethnicity. We live in an ever changing world and the changes seem to be coming thick and fast. We are being called to think about and question our attitudes, motives, dispositions and character.

So, in all this change what does it mean to be a Christian? At the time of writing this I am teaching an A level unit on Dietrich Bonhoeffer who asked himself the same question. My pupils have to analyse and evaluate whether his teaching is still relevant today – and how relevant it is! Bonhoeffer was very aware that God is a constant. God is love, God is our strong tower, our present help in trouble, our rock. However, we must constantly review how, in Bonhoeffer's words, we are to be Christ in the community. We need to think about how to respond to the hurt and suffering and pain around us, including the environment. How can we help and support our community, our neighbours in an ever changing world. So, whilst God remains our constant we need to change our ways to ensure we are loving our neighbour as ourselves.

Mags Southgate
Reader



FROM ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH



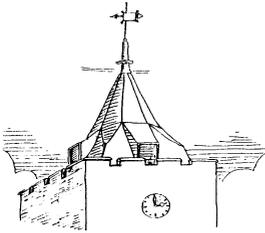
Registers



Monthly Meditation One more step

Our Sympathy

28th May **Bernard Worssam** (aged 93)



CHURCH OPENING

During this time the church lobby will be open from 9am-12.30pm for the collection of Church Magazines and to drop off food for the Loaves and Fishes food bank. Please observe social distancing when approaching the church for either of these reasons.

SERVICES FROM ST BART'S

During this time of self-isolation, St Bart's will be providing a weekly Sunday service available online at www.stbartholomews.co.uk. If you are able, please join with us online, Sunday at 10am, to share together.

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

LOAVES AND FISHES

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

A favourite hymn of mine, 'One more step along the world I go' has these lines:

*As I travel through the bad and good,
Keep me travelling the way I should;
Where I see no way to go
You'll be telling me the way, I know*

Writing this in June I know that everyone is trying to figure out what the next step into 'The New Normal' should be. Churches may be able to reopen for private prayer, but how to manage services remains unclear. Parents are concerned as to whether or not they should allow their children to return to school, and schools are working hard to find ways to run safely. Families are wondering whether they should keep their bookings for summer holidays, and if rules allow this, how can they make it safe? Even as things improve, we still face so many unknowns and need to find new ways of living.

This prayer is adapted from the prayer of St Brendan the Voyager, a 5th century Irish monk. Reputedly he set sail in a small coracle and guided by his faith ended up in Newfoundland. We need to keep our faith that we too will be guided into the right new but necessary ways.

Heavenly Father Help me to journey into the unknown. Give me the faith to leave old ways and break fresh ground with You.

Christ of the mysteries, I trust You to be stronger than each storm within me.

I will trust in the darkness and know that my times, even now, are in Your hand.

Amen

Susanne Beard

GOING TO CHURCH IN YOUR PYJAMAS



Surveys show that there are many people in the UK who would call themselves 'C of E' but rarely make it to church. Maybe that's you? Perhaps you pray frequently, do your best to follow the

teachings of Jesus, and think about going to church. But for whatever reason you don't make it very often if at all.

Have you tried visiting a church online during this period of lockdown? Across the UK, millions of people have. It is an extraordinary fact that most churches with online services have experienced huge growth in the numbers of people joining their worship each week. At our village church, St Bartholomew's, two to three times as many people are tuning in to our online services as would usually attend church on a Sunday. This is despite the fact that online worship falls well short of the experience that most of us love about going to church. We can't enjoy the peaceful atmosphere and beauty of the building. We can't chat to our friends. We can't experience the joy of singing together. We can't take Communion.

So why is online church proving so unexpectedly popular? Surely it can't just be the fact that you can watch the service in your pyjamas? Well no, but convenience does play a part. Many people – especially those with children – find it hard to get themselves to church for a 10am service; or have activities on a Sunday morning that prevent them. Some people are hesitant about walking into a building full of people they don't know. Some worry that they don't understand how to 'do'

church; they don't know the songs or responses. Some feel that they are not 'good' or 'holy' enough to go to church. Others think that they might be pounced on and prayed for! Of course all of us at St Bart's would want to reassure anyone thinking of coming to church that they needn't be concerned about any of these things. But online church is clearly an easy way for people to try churchgoing, to put their toes in the water.

If you haven't yet tried our online services, you can join in at any time on our website. Just look up 'St Bartholomew's Otford'. It would be great if you let us know what you think, so do get in touch with us through the contact details on the site.

When this is all over, will we continue to have online services? Our new Vicar, David Guest, will no doubt have a view about that. Maybe we will want to maintain some way for those who aren't regular churchgoers to give church a try. And to please those who prefer to participate in their pyjamas!

Bill Lattimer



MISSION MATTERS

As part of our annual giving to our mission partners, St Bartholomew's Church Otford will be awarding two extra grants this year. These will be for two charities both directly impacting those affected by Covid 19; one locally and one international. Locally, Loaves and Fishes the Sevenoaks based food bank will benefit.

Internationally we have chosen Tear Fund to benefit, a Christian charity whose aim is to empower the poor to use their God given gifts to escape from poverty .

Lockdown was hard for Sarah and her family. Then a deadly storm hit, damaging their house beyond repair. It made a difficult situation even worse.

Sarah lives in Liberia, West Africa. Her husband passed away in 2003, so she brings up her seven children by herself as well as working at the market as a trader to provide for them.

The lockdown meant the end of her business. Sarah was forced to dip into the small savings she had to pay for food so the family could eat. But this meant when the storm hit, there was no money to rebuild her house.

'After this storm I am completely lost – I have lost everything, food, the money I had here at home and in my business,' says Sarah. 'I have come back to nothing as you see.'

Quick response

When the government in Liberia announced the coronavirus enforced lockdown, Tearfund immediately began to prepare a response to make sure that vulnerable people were not left behind. People like Sarah and her children.

While lockdowns are important to limit the spread of the virus, they can make life much more difficult for vulnerable members of the

community – single parents, widows, people living with a disability, and those for whom home isn't a safe place.

Our Tearfund team in Liberia has been going door to door to make sure these households are able to learn about ways they can keep safe and limit the spread. They are also listening to the community and responding to people's needs. Vulnerable people are often marginalised from society, so it's important to give them the space to learn and ask questions – especially about something that directly affects them.

'I understand better the risks that are outside now,' says Sarah, after she was visited by the Tearfund team.

Relief

Our team is also delivering food parcels in the community. For people like Sarah who can no longer work to pay for food for her family, it's a lifeline. Sarah no longer has to risk the health of her loved ones by making dangerous trips out for food.

'Your coming is a real relief for me and my family...I won't use the little remaining money on food again but on rebuilding my house, since my children and I will have food to eat as the result of the project,' says Sarah. 'Thanks to you and those who sent you to us today.'

Tearfund are also working in Yemen, Liberia, Columbia, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Bangladesh (Rohingya refugees), Indonesia and South Sudan.

To donate to the Covid Appeal please visit www.tearfund.org

The logo for Tearfund, featuring the word "tearfund" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font on a dark teal background.

RECIPE FOR JULY AND AUGUST

Lemon Polenta Cake

I was asked to find a recipe that didn't use any flour as it has been particularly difficult to get hold of during lockdown. This cake is flour free but you do have to find the polenta! It is gluten free too if you omit the baking powder. It is not original but inspired by one of my favourite Nigella recipes.

200g /8oz margarine or butter

200g /8oz caster sugar

200g /8oz ground almonds

100g /4oz fine polenta

3 large eggs

Zest of 2 large lemons

1 and a half teaspoons baking powder (optional)

Syrup juice of 2 large lemons

125g/ 5oz icing sugar

Line base of 9in springform cake tin with circle of baking parchment and lightly grease sides

Preheat oven to 180°/160°C fan / reg 4/ 350°F

Beat sugar and margarine until pale and fluffy. I use a mixer but it can be done by hand.

Mix polenta, almonds and baking powder, if using, and add to mixture alternating with the egg, beating well. Finally add lemon zest.

It is a sort of batter mix, quite runny. Pour into tin and bake for approx. 40 mins.

It may be a bit wibbly but if cooked will have begun to shrink from the sides.

Remove from oven but leave in the tin.

Make the syrup by heating the juice and icing sugar until the sugar has dissolved.

Prick the top of the cake all over - I use a very thin sharp knife but a cake tester will be fine - and pour the syrup all over. I had a bit of a pool sitting on top but eventually it was absorbed by the cake.

Leave to cool in the tin.

You can eat this as cake or as I prefer, serve warm as a dessert with fresh raspberries and thick cream.

Enjoy!

Joan Beacom

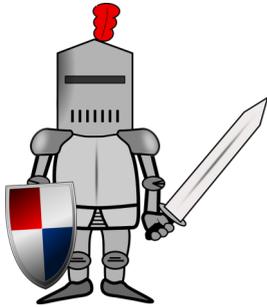


FAITH IN THE FAMILY...

Brother Sun, Sister Moon!

What do you know about St Francis? Well, he was born in 1181 in Assisi, Italy, at a time of knights and nobles, battles and conquests, when the Church was focussed on power and wealth. His dad was a rich cloth merchant, and Francis worked in his shop. But right from the start, there were signs that he was someone special.

For example, Francis annoyed his dad by giving shop money to the poor. He dreamed of



becoming a knight, and his dad bought him a carriage and weapons. But after hearing God's voice, Francis gave the weapons away to a poor man. He even gave up partying and smart clothes and began to pray in a

cave near Assisi. His dad was so cross that he locked him in a cupboard under the stairs. Luckily, his mum let him out! Soon, he exchanged clothes with a poor man and began to look after the sick. He lived in the beautiful countryside near Assisi and dressed in a simple tunic with a hood like the peasants of the time. He tied a cord around his waist. After helping to rebuild a small church, he invited friends to join him in his humble life – their mission, to preach the love of God from one city to another.

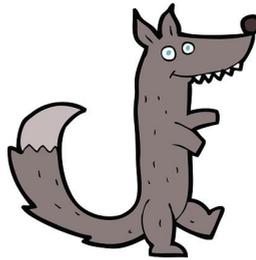


Stories have grown up about St Francis and animals. One says that while he was admiring the

beauty of the woods, he began preaching to the birds – and they listened! When he had finished, they flew off in the shape of a cross.

Another story goes that when he arrived in Grubbio, the locals told him of a fierce wolf that was attacking people and their farm animals.

Francis visited the wolf's cave and, with God's help, stayed calm when it threatened him, calling it 'Brother Wolf!' Then he bargained with it, promising it food every day if it would stop its attacks. Legend has it that the wolf became as



friendly as a dog, roaming the streets and allowing the children to stroke it!

One Christmas, in the village of Greccio, Francis transformed a cave into the stable in Bethlehem, complete with a manger, oxen and ass. People came running with torches to hear Francis tell the story of Jesus's birth.

Francis died in 1226 near Assisi. He was declared a saint just two years later. St Francis tried to live like Christ, loving God, his fellow man and every aspect of nature.

Here are some family conversation starters:

I wonder if you would like to do the same job as your mum or dad

St Francis gave up many things to lead a simple life. What would you find hard to do without?

What is your favourite animal, and why?

Do you feel closer to God in nature?



Bible passage: Read Matthew 10, vv 5,7-10 together. St Francis was inspired by these verses. Chat about your favourite Bible story or passage and how it inspires you.



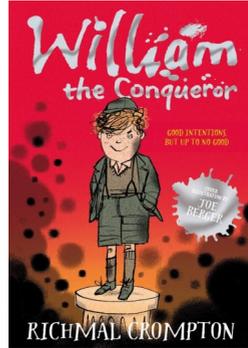
The Canticle of Brother Sun: St Francis wrote this beautiful hymn of praise. Can you find all the words on a computer? Perhaps you could draw/paint a picture to illustrate it – why not do this outside on a sunny day?

Praise be to you, Lord,
With all your creatures;
Sun, moon, stars, wind,
Water and fire,
Flowers and grass . . .



Temptation: St Francis was sometimes tempted to abandon his simple lifestyle. Legend has it that he threw himself into a thorn bush to punish himself –

and it miraculously turned into a rose-bush with no thorns. Chat about the things that tempt you to give up on a good plan. How do you keep on track?



Just William stories: If you have a copy of *William the Conqueror*, there is a funny story called *William leads a Better Life*, in which he and the ‘outlaws’ try to follow in the footsteps of St Francis! Martin Jarvis has also recorded it for the BBC.

Prayer: *This is the true prayer of St Francis:*

Most High, glorious God, enlighten the shadows of my heart and grant me a right faith, a certain hope and perfect understanding, Lord, so that I may accomplish your holy and true command.

Amen.



Vicki Howie

EVENTS, PEOPLE AND PLACES FROM OTFORD'S PAST

Otford Village School – Part 1

As some schools, including Otford Primary School, begin to re-open in June after the closures caused by the current health crisis it is perhaps appropriate to outline the early history of Otford's Primary School. I hope this will be the first of a short series of articles outlining the history of this popular and vibrant school from its early days until the early 1960s.

It seems some forms of education provision in Otford can be traced back to Stuart times, though it would be inaccurate to equate this with modern views of full-time, free and compulsory education for all. By the late 18th century the so-called 'dame schools' provided by individuals who charged small fees to provide basic literacy skills to children also became increasingly popular. Recent research has suggested these provided a more useful and for the time appropriate education than is popularly believed.

In the late 18th century a 'Sunday School' cross-denominational movement developed and is usually associated with, amongst others, Robert Raikes (1735-1811) and Hannah Ball (1734-1792) who is generally acknowledged as the founder of the first Sunday School in 1769. By 1800 some 250,000 children and adults were attending Sunday Schools nationally and by 1830 the figure had increased to some 1,250,000. As the name suggests such schooling provision was part-time, generally based upon the teachings of the Bible and provided essentially basic literacy and reading skills.

The influence of the Sunday School movement was evident in Otford. In 1807 the Reverend R.W. Hood, curate of Shoreham and Otford, reported that 'a Sunday School has existed in Otford for some years supported by voluntary contribution of the Incumbent and principal

Parishioners, who have lately erected a new Sunday School room near the Church in which thirty-two children or upwards are taught to spell and read...' In 1833 this became Otford's 'National School' the forerunner of today's primary school.

Such Sunday School initiatives led to the establishment of *The National Society for Promoting Religious Education* (or *National Society*) in 1811 by the Church of England. This was in part in response to the creation in 1808 of the *British and Foreign School Society* which was Non-Conformist. The National Society aimed to establish a National School in every parish based on the teachings of the Anglican Church with schools located, quite often and as was the case in Otford, adjacent to the parish church. There are several postcard views of the building which consisted of one large hall where children of different ages would almost certainly have been taught Christian values and no doubt a sense of discipline. National Schools far outnumbered their Non-Conformist counterparts, and the religious legacy of the creation of the two societies was to dominate debate about the nature of education provision well into the twentieth century.

By the mid-19th century both the National Society and the British and Foreign School Society found it increasingly difficult to fund their schools and from 1833 central government began to pay an annual grant to the societies, which became subject to government inspection and other interventions. It was becoming apparent, for multiple reasons, that educational provision could not be left entirely to voluntary organisations and in 1870 Forster's Education Act was passed to supplement (for example to 'fill in the gaps' of) variable church school provision. Elected local School Boards could be established for this purpose and could raise rates to build local 'Board elementary' (i.e. primary) schools, as, for example, was the case

in Sevenoaks where a School Board was established in 1875 and which by 1900 had erected three schools.

It was in response to this increasing intervention by the state in educational provision that the religious organisations sought to improve the adequacy of their own school provision. In Otford the local vicar (from 1868-1878 and perpetual curate of Otford from 1845) Robert Biscoe Tritton planned to rebuild the school in Otford. He perhaps had an eye for architecture and had been the instigator of the restoration of St Bartholomew's Church in the 1860s. He sought a local architect, who later became nationally famous, to design in 1872 the present school building and associated 'School House', now the Parish Council Office

and Heritage Centre. We shall return to this part of the story in the next edition of the magazine.

If you were a school pupil at Otford school, or have family members who attended (or currently attend) the school and have any memories of your school experiences or photographs of the school or school events, please do let us know. We can be contacted by email at info@otfordhistoricalsociety.co.uk. (Postcard views are from the Ed Thompson collection.)

Alan Williams. June 2020



St Bartholomew's Church with the National School building to the left. The school building was demolished in 1912

JULY/AUGUST WALK

A five mile walk to a nature reserve on Polhill Bank with stunning views of Otford.

The land on the hillside is owned and managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust and is a fine example of chalk downland habitat with some rare wildflowers.



The walk begins at Otford Pond.

Head west along the High Street. Past the library the pavement on the north side of the road disappears for a short distance. Beyond *Streamside* turn right into a shared drive so the mill stream is running on your left. After about 100 metres, by the old oast, follow the unmade path which forks slightly right from the end of the level part of the drive. Soon you emerge into a large field. Follow initially the line of mature trees which shelter the River Darent. Ahead you may catch a glimpse of the chalk cross carved on the hillside above Shoreham village. After the river meanders away to the left, pass through a gate into another field, again follow the left-hand boundary. As you gain a little height, stop to take in an all round view of the village and its surroundings. Continue straight on through

a couple of kissing gates into the third field on this walk, which has sweeping views over the valley to your left, this time you walk with the field boundary to your right. At the end of that field the path carries straight on into a shady path with occasional glimpses either side of the fairways of the Darent Valley golf course.

After about 600 metres the path reaches a paved lane. Turn left and descend the hill on the lane. As you pass an attractively restored old oast at the bottom you should start to hear running water by the converted mill house beyond. Continue straight on. The surface becomes an unmade track past a few more cottages to reach a utilitarian pedestrian bridge over the river. You might choose to take the opportunity to rest awhile on the bench here. If it is a hot day and the river level is low some might prefer to ford the river and/or paddle.

For the next 250 metres or so follow the bridle path with the river alongside you to the left.

There should be plenty of plant and insect life here. The path turns right by Kennel Cottage as you reach the tarmac of Water Lane.

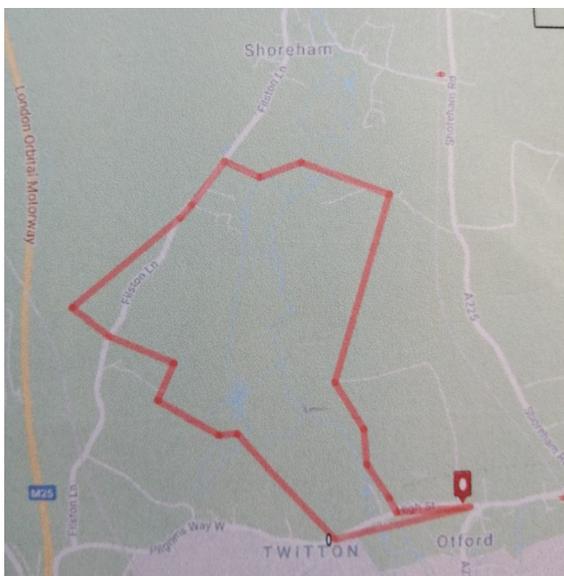
Amble up Water Lane, at the top turn left onto Filston Lane. Be careful here. Although this road is not usually particularly busy the speed limit is 60mph. Initially there is a bank on the left which makes quite a good "pavement" up to the entrance to Filston Farm, where Filston Lane curves slightly right and narrows. About 150 metres further along Filston Lane on the right you

will come to an entrance to a field with a seven bar gate and stile. Enter here, onto the land managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust. Follow the path diagonally up the field heading for the left corner of the wood. This field is occasionally lightly grazed by cattle under the habitat management programme. Immediately on entering the wood over a stile bear left up a few rough steps, passing an information board about Polhill Bank before going through a gate to soon reach more open downland. About 50 metres after that gate fork left from the main path to follow one along the line of the fence. A wonderful view back across the valley unfolds. In the distance beyond Otford you may be able on a clear day to spot the distinctive tower of Seal Church. If you are feeling energetic and do not mind some more climbing you will be rewarded with even better views if you explore the open hillside above.

Eventually you will come to an intersection with a path heading straight down the hill under some overhead wires, turn left down to Filston Lane, adjacent to Sepham Farm. Take great care as you emerge onto Filston Lane, as

it is quite a step down. Traffic will not see you until you are on the road because of the hedge. Go straight across the road onto footpath SR13. This skirts the boundary of Sepham farmhouse. Continue to keep the boundary of the farmhouse to your right when you reach a large field and turn right to join a wide track. At the end of that field, turn left onto a track which runs behind that field with a well-established hedge to its right. Beyond the large field the path narrows and, about 200 metres further on, veers a little left for a short distance in a more open area to a concrete-surfaced hump over Twitton Brook. On the other side of the hump the path narrows for a while as it passes between field boundaries. In due course the path emerges into a field. Continue straight ahead across that field to an exit onto Pilgrims Way West at its junction with Rye Lane. Turn left along the pavement, heading towards the village centre. After a few hundred metres you will be retracing your steps back past the library to the start.

Douglas Howie



IT SHOULDN'T HAPPEN TO A VICAR!

FOUR O'CLOCK

One afternoon, when my son Stephen was at Primary School, the front door bell rang. It was four o'clock. Since Stephen always arrived home at 4pm, I knew it was him, so I got down on all fours, put my head about an inch off the floor, opened the door a fraction and glared upwards with a fierce expression on my face.

It wasn't Stephen. A tall lady looked down at me, seemingly from a great height, and said in an icy voice, "Is the Vicar in?"

I leave to your imagination the rather strained conversation that took place after this. However, I salute that lady, because some six weeks later, despite this disastrous beginning, she allowed me to baptise her child.

UNDERTAKERS

There has been criticism of NHS staff dancing amid the current virus outbreak. However, people who are dealing with death all the time must have light-hearted moments. I have seen it with undertakers. I was once sitting beside the driver in the front limousine, waiting outside the crematorium as the previous service had overrun. There was sound-proof plate glass between myself and the funeral family behind me. The funeral director dismounted from the hearse in front and, removing his top hat, came to speak to me - the family no doubt thought concerning the slight delay. The driver wound down the window.

"You see that man?" the funeral director asked me, pointing to the driver, "He is probably the ugliest person I have ever seen." He then clapped his top hat on again and

walked back to the hearse. When the service was over, we were all in the same positions. He came up to me again and, as if there had been no break in his comment, delivered his final crushing verdict, "And he's an Arsenal supporter".

NO SINGING

At Orpington, during a concert with songs and sketches, the running gag one year was that the compere would *promise* from the start that there would be no singing by the Vicar! I would then attempt several times between acts, when the compere was not looking, to sing something, but would be foiled in various ways. This is one example.

Our caretaker had built a small extension to the stage with a top surface that would not bear the weight of a human body. Our pastoral assistant Doreen was behind curtains at the back of the stage armed with a long lever, like the points change lever on a railway. I came on, and, from *My Fair Lady* began the song, *I have often walked down this street before*. When I reached, *but the pavement always stayed beneath my feet before*, the curtains opened, Doreen pulled the lever and down I went under the stage. I later heard that several people said to Doreen afterwards, "I wish I could have been the one to pull that lever!"

HAPPY DAYS!

Rev'd Chris Reed



IN MEMORIAM ... BERNARD WORSSAM



Bernard was born in Marylebone in 1926. His father worked as a steward at the Travellers Club in Pall Mall and his mother was a nurse. He was the middle of three children, with an older and a younger sister. In 1930, the family moved to Barking where he

attended the local Grammar School. When WW2 broke out two years later, he was evacuated to Weston-super-Mare, returning to London in 1941, as the blitz was finishing.

On leaving school, Bernard gained a place at University College London, where he studied geology. He was a gifted student and gained a First Class degree. Upon graduating, he went into the British Geological Survey where he remained for the rest of his career. He specialised in geological mapping, and surveyed different parts of the country, including parts of Kent and Sussex, Leicestershire and Gloucestershire. His maps are still being referred to. In 1996, he was awarded a doctorate by University College London for his contribution to geological research.

Bernard married Beryl in 1960 and they moved to Horsham in West Sussex. The following year their sons Richard (our former vicar) and Anthony were born, followed by Nick in 1965.

The family spent five years in Nottingham when the Geological Survey moved up to Keyworth. But when Bernard retired at the age of 59, he and Beryl settled in Otford, a village familiar to Beryl from childhood days in Orpington.

In retirement, Bernard developed a new expertise in archaeology and building stones. He worked on a number of famous buildings, including Windsor Castle, the Tower of London, and Rochester and Canterbury Cathedrals. He also contributed chapters to various books such as the corpus of Anglo-Saxon archaeology and the "Buildings of England" series.

He was a gifted artist, particularly in water colour, and was a member of the Sevenoaks Art Club for over 20 years. He was meticulous in his research of the Worssam family tree. Together with Beryl, he attended St Bartholomew's Church for 30 years. Over the years, the family grew to include two daughters-in-law, Donna and Louisa, and four grandchildren – Christopher and Matthew, and Issie and Milly.

Sadly, Beryl died in 2016. The couple had been happily married for 56 years. In the last couple of years, Bernard lived at Westerham Place Care Home and the family are very grateful for their loving care. They will continue to cherish Bernard's memory and to give thanks for his life.



WHAT WE DID UNDER LOCKDOWN

We report here on what four Otford residents, whom you probably know already from their many contributions to the village, have done in lockdown:



Betty Bishop sings, with husband Chris, in St Bartholomew's Church Choir and with the Kemsing Singers and The Paxtol Scholars, which is a locum choir singing the services in Cathedrals when their choirs are

on holiday. Every year she contributes some of her beautiful needlework to the St Bartholomew's Christmas Fair, and many Otford residents will now have examples of her work.

In lockdown, she has applied her sewing skills to producing creative and colourful face masks. Initially she began making these for her family, designing each one to match the personal interests of her children, their partners and her grandchildren (twenty-eight in all!). Since then she has sold more than sixty to village residents, with all profits going to Loaves and Fishes food bank. Each is a unique piece of handcraft, with patterns ranging from unicorns and Harry Potter designs for children, to cupcakes for bakers and a whole range of colourful designs in between. Betty has also turned her skills to sewing isolation gowns for the Tudor Drive Seamstresses.

Betty and Chris have used Zoom and WhatsApp to keep in touch with friends and family and Betty says:

"It has been a very special time, and I think we have become calmer and more accepting – and I hope we shall all stay that way."



Ros Cooke moved to Otford in 2017 to join partner Simon Gulliver. Both sing regularly with the Kemsing Singers and at Christmas concerts with St Bartholomew's Church. Ros

volunteers with the Help the Aged Lunch Club held in Otford village hall, providing older villagers with a meal, company and transport to and from home for a nominal fee.

For Ros, the biggest impact of lockdown has been the postponement of her wedding to Simon, planned for May 30th. She has also missed seeing her family who are in London, although she has used Zoom and Social Media to keep in touch. She has kept working on an independent Fostering Panel assessing potential foster carers and reviewing their work after their first year, now meeting through Microsoft Teams.

After lockdown, she joined the Tudor Drive Seamstresses, a group of twenty local residents who produced over 400 reusable isolation gowns, scrub hats and masks for staff in local care homes, hospitals and doctors' surgeries.

Ros has found more time to garden and walk with Simon and to paint, during lockdown:

“It has been a valuable breathing space and we have noticed our younger children and grandchildren becoming more reflective and mature during this time.”



Eileen Murray Giles is secretary of the Otford Twinning Association and volunteers with the Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum (SDSAF), of which she is currently chair.

The Forum has concentrated on passing information to its 1200 members to help them cope with lockdown, giving guidance on self-care to those needing to stay at home as well as very practical advice on accessing GP, transport and volunteer services, online shopping, how to get cash and how to use the library services. The group also continues to campaign on issues which affect older members of the community, such as the need for connectivity, for public toilets to remain open wherever possible and for appropriate healthcare, housing, transport and social interaction for our seniors.

Eileen has used Zoom, WhatsApp and Facebook to keep in contact with her family and grandchildren in the UK, Canada and Australia. She has also made an effort to walk more, eat better and sleep and relax more. She says:

“I believe we will make greater use of technology in the future to keep in touch, and that the neighbourliness we have developed in lockdown will continue. Also, society now has a better understanding of isolation and loneliness.”



Rod Shelton is acting chairman of the parish council’s planning committee and secretary of the Traffic Works group. He represents the community’s views at

parish council meetings in areas such as footpaths, signage, safety and maintaining the quality of our conservation village. He was named in May as Sevenoaks Chronicle’s Community Hero of the Week.

Rod suggested the Otford Road Friends project to the Parish Council in the second week of March and they agreed to support him if he got it going. Two days later, he began knocking on doors asking for volunteer helpers and within four days, two hundred and seventy-three volunteers were signed up and ready. The Road Friends have created a network of contacts in every road in Otford so that everyone now has the telephone number of a neighbour they can call for help and most roads now have their own WhatsApp community.

Rod has concentrated on keeping well through exercise during lockdown and has used Zoom to keep in touch. He says:

“The Road Friends project has confirmed that our village still has a strong community which has resurfaced during these past weeks and I want to continue to support that spirit of camaraderie.”

Eileen Arney

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?... MATTHEW WORSSAM

It is just over 12 years since Dad became Vicar of Otford - half my lifetime ago! It was a time of great change for me, having just moved up from Hartley Primary School to Dartford Grammar the previous September. I vividly recall the nervousness I felt, especially about meeting so many new people, some of whom might become my friends.

Soon after arriving at St Bart's, I was invited to join the youth groups FROGS and YPF, where I was made to feel very welcome. In turn, I was able to get the youth of the church into ripsticking around the car park and playing basketball after church. For me, those groups were a highlight of the week and the youth weekends were certainly a highlight of the year. I have fond memories of working with my partner in crime, Patrick Hanger, to find every loophole in the rules of the games to ensure a win, without *technically* cheating. During my sixth-form years, our youth leader, Dawn, invited us to her home group where she provided dinner (often my second), before we discussed a Bible passage. I certainly kept the youth leaders on their toes by asking the most probing questions I could think of! I am very grateful for this opportunity to explore my faith and deepen my understanding of the Bible.

Finishing school, I went up to Selwyn College, Cambridge, where I spent a happy and rewarding three years studying Biological Natural Sciences. Science is a key love of mine, partly for the world-changing potential its applications have, but also for its power to explain things all around us. The breadth of the course meant that I got to study bits of Chemistry, Physiology, Neuroscience and Pharmacology, in addition to my main focus of Cell and Developmental Biology.

In addition to my studies and extracurricular activities such as badminton, I signed up to the chapel reading list and spent two years as a chapel warden. Selwyn's chapel is a beautiful building and the choir is of excellent standard, giving a peaceful atmosphere for reflection. I remain at Selwyn as a postgraduate student, now researching the disease atherosclerosis, which underlies heart attack and stroke, making it the world's biggest killer. I love being at the forefront of science, constantly learning and having a tangible goal that will benefit the world. I also supervise undergraduate students for the Cell and Developmental Biology course, which keeps *me* on my toes!

Despite having been away from Otford for a while now, I'm still in regular contact with YPF friends, going on summer holidays together and now doing regular online quizzes during lockdown. There was no need to be so nervous half a lifetime ago!

Matt Worssam



WELCOME WILDLIFE INTO YOUR GARDEN



We have had some fantastic weather in the last two months. Because of 'lockdown', we have been more involved in our gardens, watching the daily changes in plants, and how insects sit on them to feed or rest or choose a position for the next generation to thrive. The birds have reared their young and now have time to fly free before many of them prepare for their migration to warmer countries.

The white flowers of bindweed and bryony scramble in the hedgerows; old man's beard and wild hops are showing green flowers. The seeds we planted have now produced flowers for all to enjoy, plus fruit and vegetables. The fruit on trees are swelling, and hungry insects may be making holes in them. If you made an insect hotel, you may be seeing some coming



in and out of their new home. Spiders are lacing cobwebs to catch insects. Caterpillars will be munching away, ready to change into pupae before finally emerging as adult butterflies, moths and other insects. Lizards and grass snakes will be basking in the sun. If you have some tall grass in a wild part of your garden, you may see what could be a long bud on the side of a stem which carries the seed head. This will have been made by a moth or butterfly as their egg case.

You may be lucky, late one evening, to see the luminous glow of the light on the tail of a female glow worm. She is brown, 16-18mm long, and like a legged caterpillar, but not attractive - hence the light to attract a mate. Ants develop wings and undertake their swarming nuptial flights. In the air, the birds take a heavy toll of their swarms. After a couple of hours, the female descends to her old nest or a new one. She sheds her wings or bites them off and never leaves the nest again. The males, having outlived their usefulness, die soon after the mating flight. As summer progresses, the number of biting insects increase as many of us know. Wasps sting and fly away to sting again; bees leave their sting which is barbed and has to be carefully removed. They only sting once because it damages their body and they die. Many different flies are around, as are dragon and damselflies. Tadpoles have now reached adulthood as frogs or toads.

July/August tips

Deadheading flowers will encourage the plants to produce more. Shrubs may be pruned after flowering. *Pinch out apples, pears and plums* if there is an abundance, so that those left maybe larger, but because of lack of rain all fruit may be very small at maturity.

Make or find an old picture frame (without the glass). Put it on the grass or even on some soil and watch/identify the wildlife that walk over that area. Note and/or draw them in your wildlife notebook.



Elizabeth Ward

DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Recovery Plan

As the country begins to emerge from the pandemic crisis with the easing of lockdown restrictions, Sevenoaks District Council is focussed on moving from response to recovery.

As non-essential retail shops start to reopen from the 15th June, the Council will be on hand to help communities to open up safely whilst observing the Covid-19 secure guidelines on protecting shoppers and staff. The re-opening will not include hairdressers, nail bars and beauty salons, and the hospitality sector, which will remain closed until 4 July at the earliest.

The guidance for retailers includes measures such as storing returned items for 72 hours before putting them back out on the shop floor, placing protective coverings on large items touched by the public such as beds or sofas, and frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, such as self-checkouts, trolleys and coffee machines. Enforcement notices can be issued if shops reopen without the safety steps in place.

As part of the District's economic recovery plan, the Council will be supporting and working with towns and parishes on local initiatives that fall within the High Street Fund the District has been allocated. The help on offer could be anything from signage on social distancing and hygiene guidelines, to working with communities to find the safest routes for pedestrians around shopping areas. Practical assistance includes working with Kent County Council to find suitable solutions and funding

for temporary highway changes to enable and encourage residents to walk or cycle safely whilst following social distancing rules.

The Council's street cleaning services will be maintained and visible to promote the District as a safe place to shop and do business. Personal Protective Equipment bins and hand sanitiser stations will be situated in town centres in time for the reopening of retail shops. If you would like more information on the District's plan to open up safely, please contact direct.services@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

All this support is on top of the work the Council has already undertaken to support businesses in the District during the response phase up to this point, with the award of £21.96 million in reliefs and grants for over 1800 eligible firms. Thanks to the new Discretionary Business Grant Scheme set up at the beginning of June, the Council has received additional funds to help businesses who may have fallen through the cracks of all the help on offer and did not qualify for a direct business grant.

To further assist businesses coming out of lockdown, the Council has launched the Sevenoaks District Business Board, a joint private and public sector venture, to assist the local economic recovery and to promote the District as a safe place to shop, visit and do business. For more information, please contact business@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

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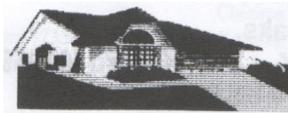
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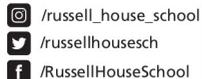
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