

## Who's who in the Parish Church . . .

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## St Bartholomew's Church Otford

### Parish News



September 2020

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

## SERVICES AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

A weekly service is now being held in church on Sunday at 10am. **Numbers are limited so please contact the church office, should you wish to attend, by the Thursday before the service.**

A Sunday service and a message for the young people is still being posted to the church website [www.stbartholomews.co.uk](http://www.stbartholomews.co.uk) each week.

There are other helpful resources on the website too, including:

Prayer for the week; Noticesheet; 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: Harvest in Otford

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## VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

Many years ago I borrowed a library book entitled "2010," a children's book that guessed how we would be living in 2010 – then about 40 years into the future.

There were plenty of flying cars, communities on the Moon, and other developments that even now remain firmly embedded in an episode of *Star Trek*.

As I join you as your new Vicar I reflect on our lives 10 years on from that fanciful book. I'm guessing that even 10 months ago none of us could have anticipated how this year would work out, with the impact of COVID-19 and its many consequences.

As for the Church, some of the changes and moves forwards we're asked to make can seem like giant leaps into hyperspace. Yet so many changes even in the past 100 years are now an established part of our lives - new Bible translations, new hymns and songs, new prayer books, new worship experiences – so many fresh expressions of who we are as Christ's followers.

The Christian Church faces many challenges and opportunities, not least in the present climate, and it would be foolish not to be willing to embrace them and try to find new ways of proclaiming the gospel in our present day. The great characters of the Bible and the saints throughout the centuries all dared to have faith and take to steps into a great unknown, confident of the Lord's guidance and strength.

Here in Otford we need to build on the past and explore ways of moving onwards in faith to ensure that the church built by our forebears is not left to die out. We need to find ways of respecting our traditions at the same time as being open to new ways of telling that old, old story to the present generation.

I have already been excited by so many signs of growth here and I look forward to opportunities to go and meet people where they are in every part of village life.

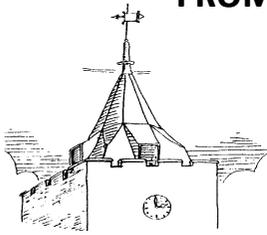
We cannot stand still, we are called ever onwards. In the words of Jeremiah the prophet: "I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" We can read that verse as words to us, words of promise and confidence.

Let us pray that we may respond to that promise and together achieve marvellous things in God's name. Let us rejoice in the truth that the Christ who walked on Earth 2000 years ago lives among us still, inspiring us, encouraging us, empowering us and loving us in all that we are and do.

*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 one Sunday morning service in church each week at 10am. We are strictly limited on numbers due to social distancing. If you would like to attend please apply to the church office from Monday-Thursday prior to the service you wish to attend at [st.bartholomews@otford.net](mailto:st.bartholomews@otford.net) or 01959 523185. Confirmation of your place will be sent out on the Friday

We will hopefully by now be live streaming our Sunday morning service so, if you are unsuccessful in getting a seat, you may watch from home or at a time that suits your family circumstances

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

- As no orders of service or hymn books can be handed out the service will be screen based and you will need to bring your own bible should you wish to use one.

There are many other online resources provided by the Church of England at [www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org)

### CHURCH FAIR

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation the Fair Committee have decided, sadly, to cancel the fair for this year. You may be aware that there have been some pop-up stalls outside the church hall during August. We would hope to continue these for as long as the weather allows.

### 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.

### ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

The APCM has been postponed. Good notice will be given of the new date.

### 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.

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**MONTHLY MEDITATION - SEPTEMBER**

**Fruits**



I think everyone likes Harvest Festival – a wonderful time to give thanks for all of God's blessings, to remember that 'All good gifts

around us are sent from heaven above' and to sing some of our favourite hymns. As I write this, plans are still being made for a way for us to be able to meet together in church, but whatever happens this year's celebration is bound to be different though none the less heartfelt.

Another thing that has been different this year has been the weather, and the unusually warm spring we had seems to have brought forward the hedgerow harvest. A friend has been picking blackberries since mid-July, and I've seen berries, hips and haws in my garden since early August. Many of us have been able to spend more time in our gardens this year, and have been rewarded with bumper crops of beans courgettes, and tomatoes, but even if like me your results were varied – the peas did well but the squirrels decimated the apple trees – the yearly miracle of the harvest is something to be truly thankful for.

Fruits of the fields and the hedgerows are just part of Gods gifts. Paul, writing to the church in Galatia, tells them of more personal gifts that we can have – gifts he called the fruits of the Spirit:

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)*

These are wonderful gifts that will enhance our lives and the lives of all around us. They are gifts that we have needed over the past few months and are going to need again. Parents have been given patience and gentleness to cope with home schooling and neighbours have shown love and goodness running errands for each other. The stresses of being with our loved ones 24/7 has certainly needed forbearance and self-control. We have managed to find unexpected joy in painted rainbows and daily walks. Despite sadness and challenges, we have reached inside ourselves and reached out to God and have been given these wonderful gifts. So when you feel yourself running on empty, don't hesitate to ask God for these fruits – food for the soul that doesn't need a trip to the supermarket.



Father God, you are the giver of all good things. I pray to ask for the fruits of the Spirit. Help me to love, to be full of joy, to bring peace, and to have patience. Help me be kind, good, faithful, and gentle when dealing with others. And finally, give me the self-control to be all these things in difficult situations so that others can see your light in me. Amen.

Susanne Beard

## MISSION MATTERS - CHRISTIAN AID

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Their work includes helping people to:

- claim their rights and access services such as healthcare and education
- ensure they are not discriminated against for any reason
- become more resilient to shocks and disasters such as drought, climate change and hurricanes
- make the most of opportunities, such as being able to sell their produce for a fair price.

On 4th August a sudden explosion tore through the port of Beirut, Lebanon as the shock wave raced through densely populated areas. Nearly 150 people lost their lives and more than 5,000 people were injured.

More than 750,000 people were affected by this terrible disaster which has left families out on the streets with no food, shelter or emergency medical care. Across the city of Beirut, neighbourhoods were reduced to rubble by the blast, along with hospitals and crucial stores containing around 85% of the country's grain and medical supplies. Homes and businesses were flattened to the ground, windows shattered, and doors knocked down. Our local partners Basmeh

& Zeitooneh and Mouvement Social responded in the most affected areas, reaching those who were already vulnerable. Together we:

- Distributed food, water, hygiene and disinfection materials as well as clothes, mattresses, and blankets.
- Helped affected households to access medicine and health services.
- Mobilised volunteers to remove rubble in the places most damaged by the explosion.
- Referred families to temporary shelters and provided minor repairs for homes including carpentry and electrical fixes.

### Will you support our Autumn Appeal?

When crisis arrived on our doorsteps this year, neighbourly love helped us through. Could we and our neighbours help more communities still facing crisis around the world?

Communities living in poverty face crisis every day, but neighbourly love is powerful. With your support, vulnerable communities are joining forces with their neighbours to overcome crisis together. Just like Angela's farming community in Nicaragua whose coffee farms are threatened by climate change. With your support, they are coming together to share tools and knowledge. United, this community can make the urgent changes needed to help their family farms last for generations so their children, like Ariana, can thrive. Ordinary neighbours like you have come together to do extraordinary things for the most vulnerable in society. In this uncertain and fragile world, let's keep looking out for our neighbours near and far.



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## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

### SAUSAGE AND APPLE CASSEROLE

This was made in preparation for the photograph when the temperature was 35°! However, in September we may get days when comfort food is wanted, and it's the beginning of the season for Russet apples which would be ideal, although most sweet varieties are fine.

Brown the sausages in the oil and keep to one side. Brown the onions, add the flour to soak up the juices and gradually stir in the cider, then the tomato puree. Return the sausages to the pan with the apples, parsnips, garlic and seasoning. Cover, the cook for 30 minutes, then remove the cover and cook for a further 20-30 minutes.

- 450g sausages (I used Cumberland)
- 1 tbs vegetable oil
- 2 onions, sliced
- 2 apples, peeled and sliced
- 2 parsnips, peeled and sliced
- 1 heaped tbs plain flour
- 300 ml dry cider
- 1 tbs tomato puree
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- Salt and pepper

Pre-heat the oven to 180°.

*Hilary Fothergill*



## FAITH IN THE FAMILY...

### September: A New Beginning



#### Out of the Ark

Mr & Mrs Noah and their sons Shem, Ham and Japheth, and all the animals had been cooped up inside the floating ark for what

seemed like ages (in

fact, it was only six weeks), when Noah said, "Sssh! Listen!"

"I can't hear anything," said Ham, "apart from that strange whistling . . ."

"Probably those blooming parrots," muttered Mrs Noah.

"I mean, I can't hear the rain boom, booming on the roof," cried Noah, racing to the window. "Oh, yes! The rain has stopped! And that whistling sound must be the wind – sent by God to dry things up!"

As they cared for the animals, no-one could resist a quick look out of the window to see how far the flood waters had gone down. Oh, how slowly they receded! Then one day, they all had a fright when the ark gave a terrible jolt and a lurch, followed by a horrible scraping sound. But they all laughed when they realised that the ark had simply come to rest on a rocky ridge beneath the water. Next came the majestic sight of the mountain tops rising out of the water. Now it was easier to see how the floods were draining away, like bath water escaping the plug hole!

"Right then, let's get outside," said Japheth, who was already stepping into his boots.

"Ooh, I don't know," said Mrs Noah. "Is it safe out there yet?"

"We need to be patient," said Noah, wisely. "Bring me a raven, Shem, and I'll send it out to scout around."

The raven was glad to spread its wings, but it flew back and forth, searching for somewhere dry to land.

"Bring me a little white dove," said Noah.

The dove flew up and away, but it returned to the ark that evening.

After another long week, Noah sent out the dove again – and this time it returned with a present; a bright green olive leaf in its beak!

Noah waited yet another week until he released the dove again. There was no sign of it that evening and so Noah knew that the world was dry enough for them to venture out.

He removed the coverings from the roof and they all blinked in the bright sunshine.

Then God told Noah and his family to come out of the ark and to bring the animals with them. Out they came, the family stretching and jumping and taking in great gulps of fresh air. Out came the animals, some a little nervously at first, then



spreading out over the plain, kicking up their hooves and galloping about, with a swish of their manes and tails! The birds soared into the blue sky, singing.

Noah built an altar and his family thanked God for keeping them safe during the flood and for giving them a fresh start. God blessed them and made them a promise:



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“As long as the Earth lasts, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease!”

And he sealed his promise with a sparkling rainbow.

**Bible story:** The story above is based on Genesis 8, 9:1-17. Here are some family conversation starters:

What do you think it would have been like inside the ark all that time (think of the sights, the sounds, the smells . . . !)

Noah must have been a patient man. How good are you at being patient?

How do you think different people/animals felt about coming out of the ark? How would you have felt?

What was the first thing that Noah and his family did? I wonder what you could thank God for during/after the lockdown?



### Clock Patience

(You will need a pack of 52 playing cards.)

Deal out 12 cards, face down in a big circle, as if they are the numbers 1-12 on a clock face, then

place one card face down in the centre. Repeat X 3 to use up all the cards in 12 piles, and with 4 cards, face down, in the centre.

Turn up one of the central cards and tuck it under the corresponding number on the clock (ie, a 3 under the 3 o'clock pile, etc). Jacks go to 11 o'clock and queens to 12 o'clock. Next, turn over *that* pile's top card and continue. Kings go

in the centre, then continue by turning over another central card.

The aim is to reveal all the numbers on the clock face before the four kings appear!

This is a very easy, calming game to play on your own and can help while away some time if you are waiting for something to happen!

### The cress head challenge!

Enjoy some boiled eggs for breakfast and clean out the empty shells. Each member of the family draws their face on an egg— or you could draw Noah and family/ some animals! Place the decorated shells in an egg carton. Fill the shells with cotton wool



to within 1 cm of the top. Moisten with water, perhaps from a spray. Sprinkle with some cress seeds. Place on a sunny windowsill and watch your seeds grow. Keep the cotton wool damp. After about 10 days, *harvest* your cress by giving them a haircut! Let's see your photos on the church *WhatsApp!*

Cress is delicious in a Marmite sandwich! Love it or hate it? It doesn't matter which - we are all different. A good conversation starter for how we feel about coming out of lockdown!

**Spot the difference prayers:** Chat about the things that are different now at school, work and church. Thank God for the things you like and ask for God's help with those you find more challenging.

Vicki Howie

## EVENTS, PEOPLE AND PLACES FROM OTFORD'S PAST

### Otford Village School part 2.

#### Thomas Graham Jackson and the 1870s school building

In 1870 the (Forster) Education Act was passed by Parliament which permitted, but did not require, the creation of local School Boards. These were empowered to raise local rates to build elementary (that is to say 'primary' in today's terms) schools. 'Board Schools', as they became known, were permitted to 'fill in the gaps' left by inadequate church school provision. Sevenoaks created its School Board in 1875 and three Board Schools had been opened by 1900. Otford and the villages surrounding Sevenoaks were too small to require Board Schools. Generally the Church of England saw state involvement as an encroachment into its provision and responded by introducing a programme of school building with the intention of retaining denominational teaching. Between 1870 and 1877 the Anglican Church provided over one million additional elementary school places. The results of this activity can still be seen in many places. For example at Underriver where a new school building was opened adjacent to the parish church in 1892. In Otford the result was the construction of a new National Elementary School, designed by Thomas Graham Jackson.



Thomas Graham Jackson (1835-1924) was born in Hampstead and the Jackson family moved to Sevenoaks in the late 1860s and lived at Vine Cottage. After studying at Wadham College, Oxford he served his architectural

articles under George Gilbert Scott (who is probably most well-known for the design of the Albert Memorial in Kensington Gardens and the Midland Hotel at St Pancras Station) and established his own London practice in 1862. He was the architect of several buildings in Sevenoaks and with his father was responsible for building Lime Tree Walk in 1878-1879, a development of twenty-four working class cottages. He is however more well-known for his architecture at the University of Oxford which includes Hertford College (including the Bridge of Sighs over New College Lane) and Brasenose College.

Jackson was in effect local to Otford and for the Otford National School his client was the local vicar Robert Biscoe Tritton who perhaps had an, albeit untrained, eye for architecture. Vicar of Otford from 1868 to 1878 (and perpetual curate of Otford since 1845) Tritton had been the instigator of the restoration of St Bartholomew's Church in the 1860s. In 1872 Tritton invited Jackson, apparently impoverished at the time, to design the new National School.

Otford's National School became the only elementary school Jackson ever designed and unlike his later work, sometimes referred to as 'post-Gothic revival', the school was built to a simple design. Many National Schools were built in a form of Gothic, but this was not the case for comparatively impoverished Otford. According to Jackson's biographer (William Whyte, 'Oxford Jackson, Architecture, Education, Status and Style 1835-1924', OUP, 2006), '(the school) was a plain brick-built box, polychromatic, and with a few Gothic details. The schoolmaster's house next door (now the Parish Council offices and Heritage Centre) is a simple vernacular cottage in white-painted brick. It is certainly not one of Jackson's most



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impressive buildings... but it does give some indication of future directions. Jackson's sensitivity to his locality is evident. The hipped roofs of both school and house are typically Kentish and the choice of materials is eminently suited to Otford. At the same time his use of colour and decorative detail prefigures the playfulness of later work. Above all else, it was the distinction between school and schoolhouse, the scholastic and domestic, which was a key feature of the future. Given the desire to have honest architecture fit for its purpose, this was a distinct achievement. It marked a satisfactory - if scarcely mould-breaking - start to Jackson's life as an educational architect.'

So, in walking down Otford High Street, it is worthwhile taking a longer look at the school building and remembering it is a unique and architecturally important building. If you have any memories of Otford School, or any photographs or documents about the school, please do let me know. I can be contacted by email at [info@otfordhistoricalsociety.co.uk](mailto:info@otfordhistoricalsociety.co.uk). You can also use this email address to ask to be added to the distribution list to receive the free History Newsletter

*Alan Williams*



*The familiar view of Otford Primary School with, to the right, school house, now the Parish Council Office and Heritage Centre. The original school playground is to the front of the school building.*



## SEPTEMBER WALK

*A four and a half mile walk, affording wonderful views over Otford as well as visiting Eastdown - a quiet valley far away from the noise of the motorway. The walk returns along a pretty section of the North Downs Way.*

*There are two steep ascents and, later in the walk, a flinty uneven path through a section of Great Wood.*

*The walk begins in the village car park.*



Cross the recreation ground to its far right hand corner. The Otford Solar System will be on your left. Exit onto Park Lane opposite the Park Farm Stables. Turn left onto Park Lane then, almost immediately, turn right through the pedestrian gate and follow the diagonal path running close to the fence, across the field where horses graze, and on towards the railway line. Cross the train tracks and continue between garden fences to the Shoreham Road.

Turn left (no footpath) and walk for about 120 yards along the Shoreham Road until you see the house sign for 'Edgehill' on your left. Cross the road and enter a field (footpath sign on a pole to your right). Continue straight up Greenhill where the bright flowers of summer have faded and died, leaving just a few stems of scabious, knapweed, clover and wild marjoram. Just before you reach the wooded area there is a bench, erected in memory of Jeremy White – 'a gentle gardener', which offers an opportunity to sit and enjoy the extensive view of Otford. You might be able to spot the towers of both the church and Otford Palace.

Carry on into the wood and follow the arrows round to the right, through a wooden gate, and out onto to the open hillside with more excellent views over Otford and Otford Mount. Continue ahead, ignoring a stile to the left which enters a wood. Further along, just before an oak tree, branch left to go through a metal gate into a meadow. Follow the path uphill diagonally to the top right hand corner of the meadow and on, through a metal gate, into the woods. Walk along the wide track until you reach the road – Rowdown Lane.

Turn right and, after about 300 yards, just before the houses on the bend, turn left (footpath sign SR30) and walk along the narrow enclosed path to a metal gate into a field. Follow the path across the field going slightly downhill before passing through a metal gate and into Great Wood.

The route now descends through this peaceful area where the silence is only interrupted by the occasional hum of a plane, birdsong and, in my case, a panting dog! A wooden gate leads you out of the woods to a quiet valley (Eastdown). You will see the footpath climbing steeply ahead of you on the opposite side of the dip. When you reach the top of this slope it is worth turning

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round and pausing to enjoy the quiet and the view.



Next enter the wooded area and continue uphill to go through a wooden gate into the field. Cross the field roughly in the direction of the mast. The path passes a wooden fence to your left. At the end of the fence, when you see the five bar gate to your left, do not go towards it. Instead turn right to pick up the footpath leading in the opposite direction across the field. Head for the largest oak tree on the far side of the field. Stay to the right of the oak tree (note the ripening acorns) and follow the grassy track down to a wooden stile beside a six bar metal gate.

Cross the stile and, following the yellow 'Explore Kent' arrow, go downhill, again enjoying the



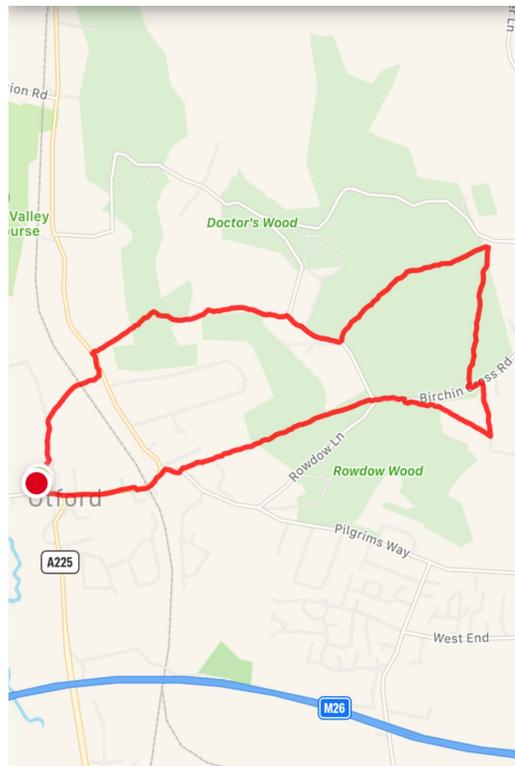
peace, to reach the woods opposite - you are now in another part of Great Wood. Continue ahead along the dark and uneven flinty footpath for some distance to reach the road (Birchin Cross Road).

Turn left on the road then, almost immediately, turn right onto Shorehill Lane. Soon after you

come to Shorehill Farm on your left, turn right onto the North Downs Way (NDW) signposted 'NDW Otford 1½ miles'. The NDW crosses two meadows before skirting the woods and then curving round to the right to join the road where you turn left. A short distance along the road brings you to the triangle of land at the top of Row Dow. Go straight ahead, looking for the NDW signs leading into a large field. Follow the NDW across the field, along a shaded woodland path, and then downhill, with more fine views over Otford, all the way back to the car park.

**NB** If you have small children with you, beware of the fast traffic on Pilgrims Way East – the crossing point from the NDW to the pavement arrives abruptly.

*Christeen Malan*

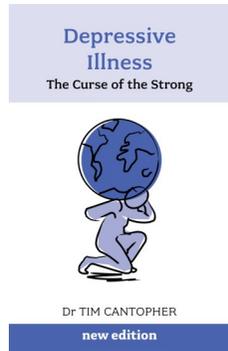


## MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

We all know how important it is to ensure we remain physically healthy yet, on the whole, we still do not think about our mental and emotional wellbeing as much, if at all.

Having had a break down almost 6 years ago, due to over-committing myself both at school and at church, I have had to learn to think differently and live life differently, accepting that I cannot **do** everything and need time to **be**. Life is for living, in all its fullness according to Jesus, but this doesn't mean being busy all the time, nor feeling anxious, nor stressed a lot of the time.

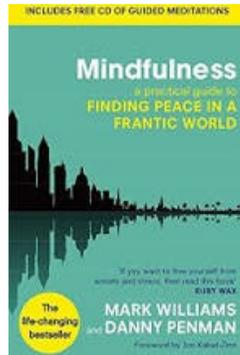
So, what are my top tips? First, listen to friends and family when they comment on how much you do and how you are. Second, be honest with yourself: do an audit of what you do, and how you feel, in a normal week and do an online questionnaire (such as <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mood-self-assessment/>) which will give a good indication of your mental and emotional well-being. Third, make a doctor's appointment and get help – you would if you felt physically ill!



**The Curse of the Strong** by Tim Cantopher was a real help to me, and my family, in understanding what was going on in my head. Apart from medication, which I still take, the other great help was Mindfulness. I know that some think this is a waste of time

and others argue they don't have the time BUT Mindfulness helped me to retrain my mind to stop me going down the downward spiral, and

has given me more time, enabled me to be more productive and, most importantly, to enjoy life again. Just as our bodies need training to remain healthy so do our minds. Mindfulness helps to stop the bad habits which we have fallen into over the years and gives good, simple strategies to enable me to live a balanced life. The book



**Mindfulness: finding peace in a frantic world** by Mark Williams and Danny Penman, both Oxford University Psychologists, has exercises included (which you can listen to if you download it). On the website: [www.franticworld.com](http://www.franticworld.com)

go to the 'Resources' tab on the left and then the 4<sup>th</sup> tab down 'Free meditations from Mindfulness' and you will find some of the exercises used in the book. However, I strongly advise doing the 8 week course as set out in the book. It does take time for your mind to be rid of the bad habits as they have had years to embed but once you go through the 8 weeks you will realise the negative ways of thinking which are not helpful and how to turn them around.

We must accept that our minds need looking after as much as our bodies and that we are limited beings who cannot **do** everything and need time to **be**.

Mags Southgate



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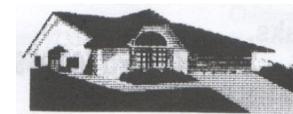
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## PUZZLE FOR SEPTEMBER

The Church gives thanks for angels in September: the 29<sup>th</sup> is the feast day of Michael and All Angels. Since the days of Genesis, these messengers of God have been sent many times to intervene for the good in human affairs. Angels guarded the Garden of Eden, they led Lot away from Gomorrah, they helped Gideon, they stopped Balaam, they closed the mouths of

lions for Daniel, and, most important, the archangel Gabriel was sent to tell Mary that she would mother the Messiah. Angels sat in the empty tomb of Jesus, and told of His Resurrection. Revelation is teaming with angels, sent on all sorts of missions by God in the last times. Today, many Christians in the world's hot spots report having had angels help them when in mortal danger.



- |            |           |            |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Thanks     | Sent      | Daniel     |
| Angels     | Intervene | Archangel  |
| Church     | Garden    | Gabriel    |
| Feast      | Eden      | Mary       |
| Michael    | Lot       | Mother     |
| All        | Gideon    | Teaming    |
| Genesis    | Balaam    | Revelation |
| Messengers | Mouths    | danger     |
| God        | Lions     |            |

## VILLAGE VOICES



**Clive** has been a member of St Bartholomew's Church since joining the choir at eight years of age. He now also sings in the Cantate choir, plays guitar, bass guitar and (occasionally) the cajon. He also enjoys

tinkering in his shed and says that he does like a good pallet to make into a planter or a wine rack.

After an enforced spell at home with COVID, Clive found that lockdown gave him a chance to spend quality time with wife Mags and children Ben (25) and Becca (22) who are both, like their parents, active members of the church.

Much of his work in the church office could be done from home, and he joined the Ministry Team to help with the extra work now needed to keep church members up to date and part of the church's worshipping community. Letters and emails are now sent out every week, as well as prayers, readings and a reflection, and there is also a weekly online service and a youth message to plan. There has also been the challenge of preparing to open the church for private prayer.

Many more people are joining online services than would normally come to the church building and Clive has concluded that this will probably mean that the church will continue its online presence so that access to fellowship can be made easier for those who find it hard to attend physically:

"We have made great strides in our reaction to a situation forced upon us. How much more could we do if we put together a sustainable plan?"



**Eileen Williams** stepped very naturally into the role of road representative for Hillydeal when lockdown started –she was already the road's neighbourhood watch representative and, newly

retired, her volunteer work at Knowle House was suspended.

She began by writing a blog every week for residents which shared essential information, for example about where to order food for delivery and how to access local medical services; and those willing to shop and collect prescriptions for others were put in touch with those needing their help.

Once the urgent need for practical information had passed, she continued to blog every week, now sharing memories about Otford in the 1980s, when she and her husband Derek had a shop in the village (The Baby Lamb) which sold ladies' and children's clothes and knitting yarn – and she often included funny poems or anecdotes, just to keep her neighbours' spirits up.

Eileen and Derek are both keen cyclists, often travelling on their tandem, and, while shielding in lockdown, they kept fit by cycling for thirty minutes every other day on a stationary bike which Derek had set up in the garden, covering enough miles to take them to Brighton and back. Eileen also set herself the project of painting all thirteen doors in their house.

Eileen has felt that a new community feeling has emerged in Hillydeal in lockdown:

"People have woken up to the fact there are kind and helpful people around them and they now stop and talk in a way they did not before; and I think that will continue."

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## DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS

### Fly-Tipping

Are you aware of your responsibility to ensure that any waste removed from your property is disposed of correctly? Recently two local homeowners were given fines for fly-tipping (illegal dumping of rubbish), make sure you do not get caught out.

By law, homeowners have a legal obligation to take reasonable steps to check that any person removing waste from their premises is authorised to do so. If you use an unlicensed waste carrier you are breaking the law, and if your rubbish is found fly-tipped and traced back to your address you could end up with a fine, or even a criminal record. This is an important weapon against waste crime as all too often rubbish taken away by a 'man in a van' ends up being fly-tipped somewhere further down the road.

As you will have seen in the news, during lockdown fly-tipping increased nationally as household waste centres closed down. At Sevenoaks District Council, the fly-tipping team has been working harder than ever since the Coronavirus outbreak to bring fly-tippers to justice. In June, two local residents were handed £400 fines each for fly-tipped waste that was traced back to them. In the case of the first incident in Badger's Mount, the discarded waste contained packaging with the address of the homeowner, and in the second case in Crockenhill, the waste was traced back to an address in Orpington. The homeowner had paid £30 to have their waste taken away but did not check if the carrier had a waste licence. As both homeowners had not taken the required precautions to prevent their waste from being dumped, fines were issued.

To ensure that you do not fall foul of the law and have taken reasonable steps to make sure that your waste is disposed of correctly, follow this check list:

Ask the waste carrier to provide you with their full address and telephone number

**Record the vehicle registration number of any vehicle used to take your waste away**

Ask to see the waste carrier's licence - if they do not have one, do not use them

Check where your waste will be going - it must be a licensed waste disposal site

Ask for a Waste Transfer Note giving details of where your waste will be disposed

Check if the removal service has a licence with the Environment Agency directly on 08708 506 506 and ask for a free instant Waste Carrier Validation Check. Alternatively you can check online at: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers>

For further information on fly-tipping, or to report a case of fly-tipping within the District, please visit:

[www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20000/rubbish\\_and\\_recycling/205/report\\_fly\\_tipping](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20000/rubbish_and_recycling/205/report_fly_tipping) or call Sevenoaks District Council 01732 227000.

If you witness fly-tipping as it is happening, please dial 101, the Police non-emergency number, to report the incident.

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



## WHAT'S IN YOUR HAND?

September is usually the time when we get back to our normal routines after the summer break. With the current coronavirus pandemic, it's very different this year! However, it is still a good time to consider how God can use us to make a real difference in our workplace, school, family, friends and community. He equips us with everything we need to make His love known.

When God gave Moses the job of bringing the Israelites out of Egypt, He asked the question, 'What is in your hand?' (Exodus 4:2). Moses was holding his staff, which represented his livelihood (what he was good at); his resources (his flock represented his wealth) and his security (which God was asking him to lay down). God asks the same question of us: *What has God given you?* Our gifts, temperament, experience, relationships, mind, education can be used in the work God has given us to do. How will we use them to make a difference in the places where He calls us to serve Him?

John Ortberg, in his book *It All Goes Back in the Box*, speaks of Johnny, a 19-year-old with Downs syndrome. He worked at a supermarket checkout putting people's items into bags. To encourage his customers, he decided to put a *thought for the day* into the bags. Every night his dad would help him to prepare the slips of paper and he would put the thoughts into the bags saying, 'I hope it helps you have a good day. Thanks for coming here.' A month later the store manager noticed that Johnny's line at the checkout was three times longer than anyone else's! People wanted Johnny's thought for the day. He wasn't just filling bags with groceries, he was filling lives with hope!

What has God given *you* that will help and encourage others?

*Canon Paul Hardingham considers our personal resources – in light of the pandemic.*



"But did they plough the fields and scatter at a safe distance?"

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?... JOE HANGER

We moved to Otford when I was 4, in 1997, and soon started going to St Bart's. I attended Sunday School in the village hall, progressing with a group of friends through to Venturers, OTT, Frogs and eventually YPF. At the age of 11, I was confirmed by Bishop Nazir-Ali; I recall that he spent time getting to know us beforehand and explained the meaning of each of our names during the service. I joined the serving team (helping the Vicar at communion) and continued to do this until I left for Nottingham University in 2011.

Within a term of studying medicine there, I met my now wife, Anna, through a mutual Christian friend from my days at The Judd School. Throughout my five years, I spent a couple at Trent Vineyard, a Church of England fringe church in a warehouse, and had the opportunity to listen to Archbishop Welby just prior to him moving to Lambeth Palace.

By 2014, Anna and I were engaged and she was now working for a children's charity whilst I was still in Nottingham. Neither of us had a church in our city we felt strongly towards and therefore it felt only right that we return to Otford to be married. In April 2016, just before my finals, Richard Worssam married us, and before going on our honeymoon to Dublin and Menorca we had to return to Nottingham for me to pass my final exams! At the end of our honeymoon we were joined by the other YPF members from the church who I had grown up with and Anna had got to know over the previous years.

We moved to Devon where I started work as a doctor and Anna as a teacher. We have been here four years now, attending St Leonard's Church Exeter, and we have both been involved with home groups and weekly Bible study groups. Hopefully we will be able to stay settled

for some time, dependent on me getting a Trauma and Orthopaedic surgical training post.

On 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019 we welcomed our first daughter Abigail Rebekah, a fantastic blessing in both our lives - even when she wants to play at 2am! It was wonderful that we were able to bring her to St Bart's for her first Christmas Day service and introduce her to the church family.

There is not enough space here to go through all the fantastic opportunities St Bart's has offered me, from Big Church Day Out, Spring Harvest and Sherringham Beach Mission with Dawn, to fellowship with friends and helping lead sessions at the Church Youth weekend away. I wouldn't be where I am today without the help and love of St Bart's.



## WELCOME WILDLIFE INTO YOUR GARDEN



September still has many days like summer, but, as the well-known poem goes, it is "the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness". I hope the past months have given you the opportunity to look more closely at nature. We had the chance to see very tiny baby lizards, and slowworms, also a large leopard slug bathing in a shallow dish of water that is kept near the titbits for the birds. The hot weather has affected the number of wild orchids but the abundance of other wild flowers fed the numerous butterflies, bees and other insects. I have recently found out that there are 170 species of bees. How amazing!

It is the month of myths and country sayings. The large Roman snails which we have in our garden, (edible snails, now a protected species) hibernate in crevices, under logs, stones or leaf litter. They close their door behind them by plugging the aperture of their shells with a thin layer of chalk. An observant sage said he could tell if it would be a mild or hard winter by the thickness of their 'door' or how deep they buried themselves. By the same token, mice dig their tunnels deeper.

We will all have gathered, I hope, an abundance of tomatoes and runner beans, and are now gathering apples, plums and pears, although the fruits will be smaller this year as it has been so dry. The leaves on the trees will be changing colour; the lime will be the first to turn yellow. Especially after a dry summer we may hear trees like beeches, oaks and poplars shed some of their limbs. This self-pruning is aimed at water economy and is not as dangerous as it looks. The tree has already reduced the water supply to the limb and begun to seal the joint.

Many plants have a second flowering, especially marigolds. Honeysuckle may simultaneously bear buds, flowers, unripe green and ripe red berries. Any flower that is still open in the evening can be pollinated by night-flying moths. Wild hops can be seen in the hedgerows (male and female flowers on separate plants). Blackberries are ripe for picking, although very small this year due to lack of rain. Towards the end of September, ivy bursts into flower with small green, five-petalled flowers. Insects welcome this bonus of nectar, especially flies and bees. Spiders spin their complicated webs, glistening in the early-morning mists of September. Garden spiders' sticky silk wheels can ensnare insects as large as wasps.

Many birds are planning or will already have started their migration to warmer climes. We, as well as farmers, will be gathering our harvest, jam-making, freezing, storing ready for the winter and the year ahead. Don't forget to check that your insect hotel is safe for the winter residents, or if you haven't made one, now is the time to have a go.

May God be with us all as we face an unsettling winter.

*Elizabeth Ward*