

Sunday Services across the Team

All events in our Team are currently cancelled in line with the national guidelines for all churches across the country issued by the Church of England.

St. Bartholomew's Church will be open for a service each Sunday at 11:00am and St. George's & St. Thomas' churches at 9:15 am every Sunday. Guidelines about face coverings / distancing / signing in etc. will all still apply.

OFFICE HOUR HAS BEEN SUSPENDED IN LINE WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES. For all enquiries relating to baptism and weddings, and for other routine matters, please contact the Rector, details below.

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Items for inclusion in future newsletters should be sent to the parish office:
westhoughtonparish@outlook.com
or given to Edward McHale, churchwarden and Director of Music

www.westhoughtonchurches.org.uk



Parish of St Bartholomew
Westhoughton
St Bartholomew St Thomas
St George



NEWSLETTER - JULY 2021

Hi all,

Well, the great re-opening hasn't happened yet, so we're still all following the same rules as before. If anything changes in July we'll keep you updated.

There is some progress as we have been reading the banns for some much postponed weddings that will be happening in our churches over the coming months. We're also looking to restart baptism services from August but bear with us as we've an 18 month backlog to get through! We will have a limited number during Sunday services at St. Bartholomew's and these will not be communion services.

It's a month bookended by celebrations as we mark the feast day of St. Thomas on the first weekend of July and the feast of St James the Great on the last Sunday of the month. There are more details on both these saints in the Pewsheets Plus and we'll be marking them in our Sunday services. Last year in the Pewsheets Plus we did a virtual pilgrimage to Santiago di Compostela [the shrine of St. James in Spain] as going abroad was not allowed. We may do the same this year if I don't get any better ideas and there's a few details of its history later in this Newsletter.

As promised last month in our look at hymn-writing MPs, we're looking at the hymns of former Bolton MP, Sir John Bowring. It's a hectic life with four initially successful then failed careers, inventing decimalisation, starting a war, causing a general election, marrying twice and having five children. Quite when he found time to write hymns is anyone's guess. Next month, we'll look at G K Chesterton [who wrote Father Brown stories that you may have watched on TV] who only managed to write one hymn.

We pray for the candidates for ordination in July as we welcome Andy Jones and his family as our new curate. Plus, as ever, the odd cartoon.

Keep safe & well

Ed

Hymns of the Month – July

As mentioned last month when we looked at some hymn-writing MPs, we're looking this month at Sir John Bowring, MP for Bolton from 1841 – 49 and author of some 88 hymns. It's a rollercoaster of a life, so fasten your seatbelts.



Sir John Bowring, (born Oct. 17, 1792, Exeter, Devonshire, - died Nov. 23, 1872, Claremont, near Exeter)

Sir John Bowring was born in Larkbeare House, in Exeter. He came from a large family of textile merchants long established in Devon. His father was Charles Bowring (1769–1856), a wool merchant from an old Unitarian family, and his mother was Sarah Jane Anne (d. 1828), the daughter of Thomas Lane, vicar of St. Ives, Cornwall. His last formal education was a Unitarian school in Moretonhampstead and he started work in his father's business at age 16.

By that time he could speak five languages which he used to represent his father in foreign markets. He picked up many languages as he travelled abroad in the family business and claimed by his death to know 200 languages and speak over 100, although his contemporaries contest this. Few Victorians have led a more varied and controversial life than Sir John Bowring. The formal poses of the photographs of his day mask the fact that Bowring's life was a hectic game of snakes and ladders. When he came to China at the age of fifty-seven, as Governor of Hong Kong, he had already succeeded and then failed in four separate careers, as civil servant, editor, businessman and radical politician. His restless energy, coupled with an almost total lack of discretion, brought him up each slope to somewhere near the top, then rolled him down again. Nor did old age reduce his restlessness or improve his luck. Ten years in China enabled him to start a war, and bring about a major political crisis and a general election in Britain.

When the philosopher and economist Jeremy Bentham started the *Westminster Review* in 1824 as a vehicle for the views of English radicals,

Bowring became co-editor of the publication, and he subsequently took over its entire management. By his contributions to the *Review* he obtained considerable reputation as political economist and parliamentary reformer. He advocated in its pages the cause of free trade long before it was popular. He pleaded earnestly on behalf of parliamentary reform and popular education.

The University of Groningen in the Netherlands conferred on him the degree of doctor of laws. In the following year he was in Denmark, preparing for the publication of a collection of Scandinavian poetry. From the 1820s on he published studies in and translations of the literatures of eastern Europe and also of the Netherlands and Spain.

In 1835–37, he was elected MP for Kilmarnock and between 1841–49 he was the member of Parliament for Bolton, where he supported free trade, the repeal of the Corn Laws, penal reform, and the abolition of flogging in the army. He soon gained a reputation as a diplomat heading government missions to Europe to investigate commerce and attended the 1840 Anti-Slavery Convention.

He advocated Britain's adoption of the decimal system of currency, securing the issue of the florin (two shillings, or one-tenth of a pound) as a step in this direction, publishing a work entitled *The Decimal System in Numbers, Coins and Accounts* (1854) 100 years before decimalisation came in.

Bowring was a founder of the Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science, Literature and Arts and was its first President in 1862.

With no inherited money and MP for Bolton being an unpaid role [!], Bowring sought to sustain his political career by investing heavily in the south Wales iron industry during the mid-1840s. He was knighted by the Queen, becoming Sir John Bowring. He led a small group of wealthy London merchants and bankers in establishing a large integrated ironworks



company. The district around his ironworks became known as Bowrington. Although he lost his capital in the trade depression of the late 1840s, John Bowring had gained a reputation as an enlightened employer. A contemporary commented that 'he gave the poor their rights and carried away their blessing.'

The failure of his venture in south Wales led directly to Bowring's acceptance of the consulship at Canton in 1849 and acted as superintendent of trade in China, a post which he held for four years. Then on 13th April 1854 he was sent to Hong Kong as governor. During his governorship, a dispute broke out with the Chinese and the irritation caused by his spirited or high-handed policy led to the Second Opium War (1856–1860). At the same time, he allowed the Chinese citizens in Hong Kong to serve as jurors in trials and become lawyers. Finally, Bowring is credited with establishing Hong Kong's first commercial public water supply system and establishing the Hong Kong buildings ordinance, ensuring the safer design of all future construction projects there. Later deployments by the British Government saw him involved in diplomatic missions all over Europe. In 1861 he was sent as a commissioner to the newly created kingdom of Italy.

Bowring married Maria in 1818. They had five sons and four daughters but sadly died of arsenic poisoning in 1858. He married his second wife, Deborah Castle in 1860 but they had no children. Bowring had three sons [one a renowned expert in beetles], and a daughter who turned completely from the family's Unitarian beliefs and became a Roman Catholic nun.

So what about his hymns? Well, Most of his many writings have been forgotten except for a few poems. One story tells of Bowring, while in Hong Kong in 1825, he saw a magnificent cathedral, destroyed by the ravages of the Opium War. Only the front remained. Atop it was a great metal cross, blackened by time and silhouetted against the sky. Taking the words from Galatians 6:14, he wrote the hymn below:

1 In the cross of Christ I glory,
towering o'er the wrecks of time;
all the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.

2 When the woes of life o'ertake me,
hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
never shall the cross forsake me.
Lo! it glows with peace and joy.

3 When the sun of bliss is beaming
light and love upon my way,
from the cross the radiance streaming
adds more lustre to the day.

4 Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
by the cross are sanctified;
peace is there that knows no measure,
joys that through all time abide.

5 In the cross of Christ I glory,
towering o'er the wrecks of time;
all the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.

This hymn might have been forgotten too as the tune to which it was set was not good, if it were not for people skipping the service on a particular Sunday morning at the Central Baptist Church in Norwich, Connecticut. The preacher had planned a series of sermons on the seven last words of Christ on the Cross. According to the Norwich Bulletin: "One Sunday during the series it was a very rainy day and the organist was sorely disappointed that the members of the choir did not appear, as only one soprano came. He was so discouraged and disheartened that after the pre-service music, he packed up and went home. *[As at St. Bart's, the minister and choir gallery were at opposite ends of the church, and he could leave without attracting the attention of the congregation]*. That afternoon, as he sat down

at the piano for practice, his mind was distracted with the thoughts of the sermons and the words of the hymn, 'In the Cross of Christ I Glory.' He there and then composed the tune known as RATHBUN named after the one choir member who showed up on that rainy Sunday in 1849, namely Mrs. Beriah S. Rathbun."

The following hymn is more known in the USA than Britain and is used as an Advent hymn. It's often sung as a solo at the start of the midnight service.

1 Watchman, tell us of the night,
what its signs of promise are.
Traveller, what a wondrous sight:
see that glory-beaming star.
Watchman, does its beauteous ray
news of joy or hope foretell?
Traveller, yes; it brings the day,
promised day of Israel.

2 Watchman, tell us of the night;
higher yet that star ascends.
Traveller, blessedness and light,
peace and truth its course portends.
Watchman, will its beams alone
gild the spot that gave them birth?
Traveller, ages are its own;
see, it bursts o'er all the earth.

3 Watchman, tell us of the night,
for the morning seems to dawn.
Traveller, shadows take their flight;
doubt and terror are withdrawn.
Watchman, you may go your way;
hasten to your quiet home.
Traveller, we rejoice today,
for Emmanuel has come!

The other hymn of his which still appears in hymn books is:

1 God is love: His mercy brightens
All the path in which we rove;
Bliss He wakes and woe He lightens:
God is wisdom, God is love.

2 Chance and change are busy ever;
Man decays and ages move;
But His mercy waneth never:
God is wisdom, God is love.

3 E'en the hour that darkest seemeth,
Will His changeless goodness prove;
Through the gloom His brightness streameth;
God is wisdom, God is love.

4 He with earthly cares entwineth
Hope and comfort from above;
Everywhere His glory shineth;
God is wisdom, God is love.

With the 150th anniversary of his death falling next year, perhaps we'll dig them out and sing them again.

To receive these pewsheets, newsletters or special events leaflets electronically, please e-mail westhoughtonparish@outlook.com

Ordinations 2021



We remember all those preparing for ordination as deacons or priests especially Andy Jones who will be ordained deacon by the Bishop of Manchester at Manchester cathedral on Sunday 4th July 10:30am and will be serving his curacy in our team. He'll have particular responsibility for St. George's during his time with us and will be living at Daisy Hill vicarage. We pray for Andy, Katie and their son Harry as they prepare for this new ministry.

His first services with us will be at St. George's and St. Bartholomew's churches on Sunday 11th July.

You may also remember Layfetta Masih who spent some time on placement in this parish in late 2019. She will be ordained priest by the Bishop of Bolton on Saturday 3rd July at Manchester Cathedral and we pray for her and her family as she serves in the West Bolton group of churches.



You may also remember Lee Higson from Deane Parish Church who again spent some time with us on placement a few years ago. He's also being ordained deacon this month and tells his story below:

Lee Higson worked as a Captain onboard an FPSO – a cross between a ship and an oil rig – 120 miles east of Aberdeen in the North Sea.

When back home with his wife and three boys, worshipped at Deane Parish Church, in Bolton.

Reflecting on his time at sea, Lee says, "There was always a great camaraderie on board" but recalls that worship could be challenging, "on a small platform in middle of the North Sea."

So, Lee began a Sunday morning 'cell church' onboard, where fellow Seafarers could meet weekly to read and discuss the Bible together, to pray for each another, and to pray for the crew onboard.

"Seafarers are generally so open-minded," says Lee. "When you have experienced the power of the sea and storms at night it makes you open to something beyond the secular world. It is not difficult to have faith-based conversations".

Describing his own faith, Lee explains, "When I am outside on a ship or a boat at night, I look at the night sky and I don't have any doubts at all. It confirms my faith. I can see God in the stars; I can see His power and His love."

It is at those times, Lee says, that he remembered the verses from Psalm 107: 'Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the great waters; they saw the deeds of the Lord, his wondrous works in the deep.'

Lee has been on placement at Oldhams Church in Bolton, completing his studies at St. Mellitus College, and will be ordained deacon in July at Manchester Cathedral.



History of the Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela



The story of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela is intertwined with the history of Christianity.

After Jesus' resurrection, St. James became the leader of the church in Jerusalem. According to tradition, he also travelled to Spain to spread the Good News, then returned to Jerusalem where he was martyred. Following his death, his followers are said to have taken his body to the coast, where a ship was miraculously waiting for them. The body of St. James was interred in a tomb in north-western Spain, after which its location fell into oblivion for centuries.

Around the year 815, a Spanish hermit named Pelayo had a vision in which he saw a bright light shining over a spot in a forest. The matter was investigated and a Roman-era tomb containing St. James' body was found. The bishop of a nearby town, Theodomir, had a church built on the site of the tomb.

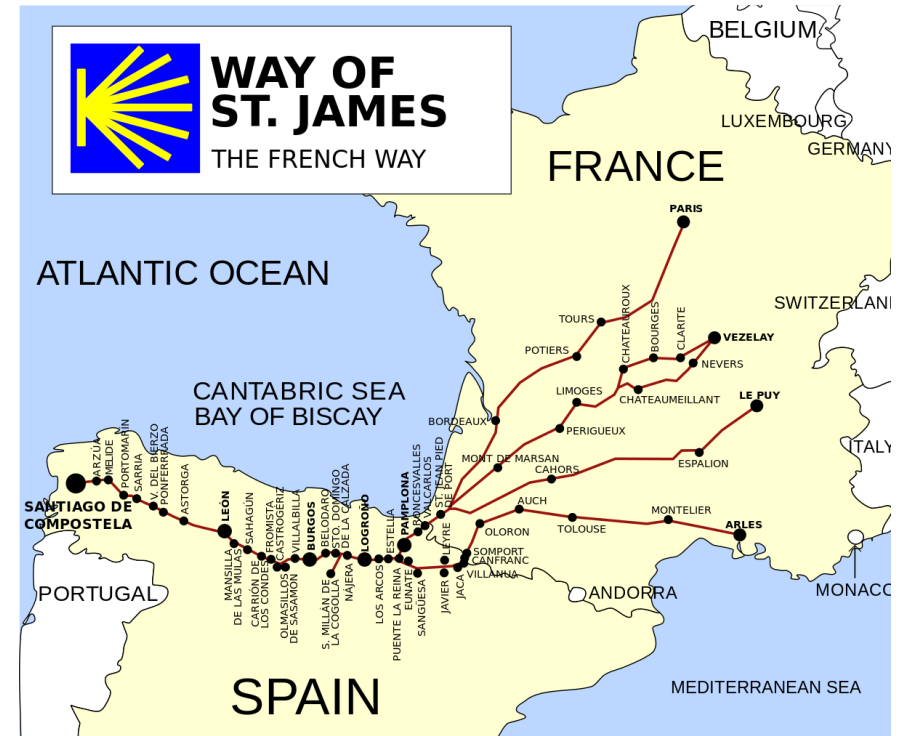
Around this shrine the city of Santiago de Compostela grew (while its origins are not certain, Compostela may come from the Latin *campus stellae*, "field of stars"). The shrine began attracting pilgrims, who steadily increased in number until by the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a half-million pilgrims a year were making their way to Santiago.

The pilgrimage drew the devout from across Europe for several reasons. In the year 1122 Pope Calixtus II granted the city various privileges with



special consideration given to those who made the pilgrimage in a year when the Feast of St. James (July 25) fell on a Sunday.

Spanish bishop Diego Gelmirez was a strong advocate for the city as well, starting a large-scale building program that included the construction of its immense Romanesque cathedral, as well as facilities for the many pilgrims who made their way to Santiago.



The kings of the neighbouring lands of Aragon, Navarre and Castile contributed to the route's popularity by building bridges, hospitals, and other pilgrim services, often entrusting the work to the monks of the French order of Cluny. While many roads led to Santiago from all over Europe, the most travelled became the French Road, which passes over the Pyrenees Mountains before entering Galicia

The Way of St. James was difficult, but for many pilgrims it offered a much easier trip than the journey to Jerusalem or Rome. Monuments, churches, monasteries, towns, and cities grew up along the network of roads leading

to Santiago, and the city itself benefited greatly from the spiritual, economic and cultural growth stimulated by the millions of pilgrims.

The Way of St. James became the first great thoroughfare of Christian Europe, a meeting place for people from a wide variety of backgrounds and nations. On the road pilgrims from many countries mingled.

For many centuries, the pilgrimage drew both the wealthy and the poor. A pilgrimage was seen as an enactment of the spiritual journey to Christ, and the hardships along the way were welcomed as tests of faith.

As the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela grew in popularity, so did the legends and lore associated with it. The scallop shell became the symbol of the pilgrimage, in part because the shells were common along the Atlantic beaches just west of Santiago. Travellers would wear a scallop shell to proclaim their status as pilgrims, and the motif was incorporated into many of the buildings, wells, churches, and monuments along the route.

The shell was also the subject of a legend that said that when the body of St. James was being returned to Spain, a knight fell from a cliff on shore and drowned as the body passed by. When the knight miraculously arose alive from the water, he was covered in scallop shells.

In the seventeenth century, Sir Walter Raleigh immortalized the pilgrimage with words that remain popular among pilgrims to this day:

Give me my scallop shell of quiet;

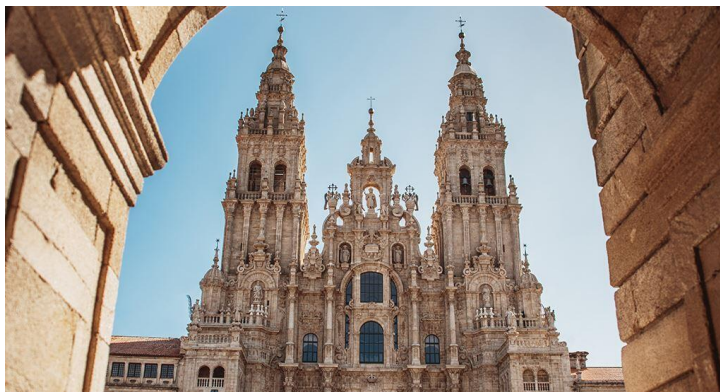
My staff of faith to walk upon;

My scrip of joy, immortal diet;

*My bottle of
salvation;*

*My gown of glory,
hope's true gauge*

*And then I'll take my
pilgrimage.*



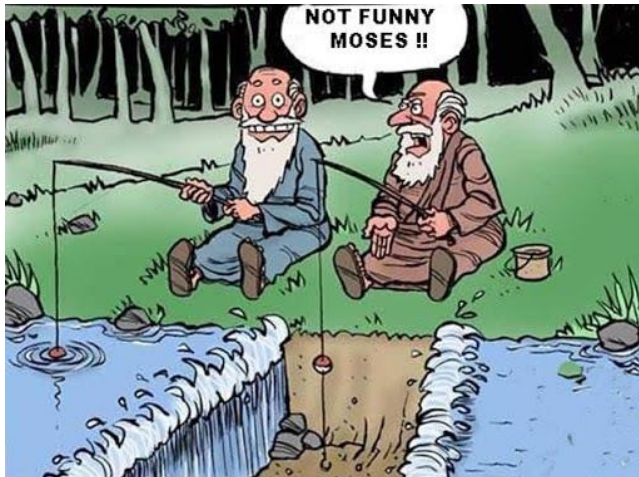
(See Acts 7:30-35)

06-13-2006



Thanks to Course Clarkson (See Exodus 7-12) 03-26-2012

I'VE GOT YOU DOWN FOR BLOOD, FROGS,
LICE, LOCUSTS AND HAIL ... WOULD YOU
LIKE ANY FLIES WITH THAT?



Thanks to Richard German (See Mark 10:25) 01-10-2007

YET ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO FIT A CAMEL
THROUGH A NEEDLE



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