

WE ARE THE CHURCH



St Bartholomew's Church,

Otford Parish News

SERVICES AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

February	8.00am	10.00am	3.00pm	6.30pm
5th Feb	Holy Communion	All Together Worship	-	Evensong
12th Feb	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	-	-
19th Feb	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	-	Evensong
26th Feb	Holy Communion (BCP)	Holy Communion	-	-

SUNDAY CLUB (FOR AGES 0-14)

INFANT: 3-7

JUNIOR: 8-11

SENIOR: 12-14

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

First Steps for toddlers and their carers meets on alternate Wednesdays during term time. For more details please contact Najen Harris, 01959 522813.

EPIC (for school years 5-7) meets on the 2nd Saturday in the month, 6-8 pm in the Church Centre.

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

HOLY COMMUNION Every Wednesday 10.00 am (Book of Common Prayer)

If you would like to book a baptism or wedding, please contact the Church Office 01959 523185.

Vicar's off duty day: Monday

Cover photo by Richard Worssam. Magazine printed by Silver Pines Services

Magazine No. 02 Volume 87

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

Given that my wife Donna is American, we watched the inauguration of Donald Trump as President of the USA with particular interest. An inauguration speech is, in effect, a mission statement. So how would Trump use this occasion, with a worldwide audience, to set out his vision? I have to say I listened to his words with an increasing sense of dismay.



I accept that a core job of any government is to promote and defend its national interests, but Trump's strident mantra of "America First" seemed to cross the line into a worrying elevation of nationalism and protectionism. This was reinforced with his gesture of clenched fists during the inauguration ceremonies, and then later that day dancing to the music of "I did it my way". There was little sense of international co-operation.

As has been widely observed, his speech was delivered in the same tone as his election rallies, and for me this had the effect of reinforcing my existing hesitations regarding his proposed policies. To give just two examples, he says he will work for the marginalised, and yet one of his first acts was to set in motion the dismantling of the Affordable Healthcare Act of 2010 which was designed to benefit some of the poorest in American society. He has appointed as head of the Environmental Protection Agency Scott Pruitt who has close associations with the fossil fuel industry and who casts doubt on global warming. I could go on.

The divergent views on Trump's presidency are keenly felt in Christian circles. Whilst, undoubtably, he found support from some church groupings, there are many who have severe doubts about his politics and his policies. Some questioned whether it was right for a Christian choir to sing during the ceremonies and for a prayer service to be held in the episcopal Washington National Cathedral the

day after the inauguration. The reply of Michael Curry, the presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, was that to pray for a leader is not necessarily a declaration of support, but rather "a desire that God would lead him to govern for the common good." And in terms of the choir singing, it was right to celebrate a peaceful transfer of power and thereby an honouring of democracy.

For me, a key phrase in the inauguration ceremony was spoken by Rabbi Marvin Hier in the prayers after Donald Trump took his oath. He said, "A nation's wealth is measured by her values and not by her vaults." This points to the crucial issue of the values by which Trump will seek to govern America.

It is our values which guide our actions. In the Old Testament, the prophets often spoke to those in authority, urging them to be true to the values enshrined in God's covenant with the Israelites. Jesus continued this tradition when he spoke of the values of the Kingdom of God. I would suggest these values are encapsulated in the words of the prophet Micah: "And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." It would be good to pray that these values will be upheld over the next four years.

Your friend and Vicar, *Richard*



DIARY FOR FEBRUARY 2017

Morning Prayer will be said in Church on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week at 9.00 am and on Fridays in the Cranmer Room at 9.00 am

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | 9.30 am | 'First Steps' (Otford Free Church, Pilgrims Way West) |
| | 10.00 am | Holy Communion (BCP) coffee afterwards |
| 5 | The Fourth Sunday before Lent | |
| | 8.00 am | Holy Communion |
| | 10.00 am | All Together Worship |
| | 6.30 pm | Evensong |
| 6 | 7.45 pm | Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue) |
| 8 | 10.00 am | Holy Communion (BCP) |
| | Magazine material for the March edition by today, please, to the Church Office, st.bartholomews@otford.net | |
| 10 | 2.15 pm | Magazine Editorial Team (The Vicarage) |
| 11 | 6.00 pm | EPIC (Church Centre) |
| 12 | The Third Sunday before Lent | |
| | 8.00 am | Holy Communion |
| | 10.00 am | Holy Communion |
| 13 | 7.45 pm | Discussion (17 Leonard Avenue) |
| 15 | 10.00 am | Holy Communion (BCP) |
| 19 | The Second Sunday before Lent | |
| | 8.00 am | Holy Communion |
| | 10.00 am | Morning Worship |
| | 3.00pm | Otford Junior Choir |
| | 6.30 pm | Evensong |
| 20 | 7.45 pm | Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue) |
| | 8.00 pm | St. Bartholomew's Fair Committee ('Burway', Sevenoaks Road) |
| 21 | 8.00 pm | Fabric Committee (Church Centre) |
| 22 | 9.30 am | 'First Steps' (Otford Free Church, Pilgrims Way West) |
| | 10.00 am | Holy Communion (BCP) |
| | 2.30 pm | Joint meeting with Otford Methodist Church (Methodist Church Hall) |
| | 7.45 pm | PCC (Church Centre) |
| 26 | The Sunday next before Lent | |
| | 8.00 am | Holy Communion (BCP) |
| | 10.00 am | Holy Communion |
| 27 | 7.45 pm | Discussion (17 Leonard Avenue) |

SOME DATES FOR 2017

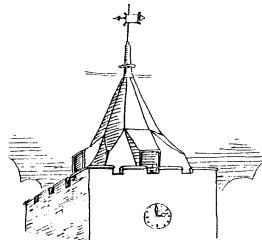
Significant Sundays and Special Services

Wednesday 1 st March	Ash Wednesday (8 pm Holy Communion at Methodist Church)
Friday 3 rd March	Women's World Day of Prayer (2 pm St Bartholomew's Church)
Sunday 26 th March	Mothering Sunday
Sunday 9 th April	Palm Sunday Procession (10.45 am from Methodists, 11 am the Green)
Thursday 13 th April	Maundy Thursday Service (8 pm at St. Bartholomew's Church)
Friday 14 th April	Good Friday services
Sunday 16 th April	Easter Day services
Sunday 7 th May	Service to commemorate Departed Loved Ones (3 pm)
Sunday 21 st May	Civic Service (10 am)
Thursday 25 th May	Ascension Day - Deanery Holy Communion at St. Bart's, 7.30 pm
Sunday 4 th June	Pentecost/Whit Sunday
Sunday 11 th June	Trinity Sunday
Sunday 2 nd July	Sunday Club Celebration Service & Parish BBQ in the Vicarage garden
Sunday 1 st October	Harvest Services
Sunday 29 th October	Bible Sunday
Sunday 12 th November	Remembrance Sunday (10 am in church and 11 am on the Green)
Sunday 3 rd December	Christingle
Sunday 17 th December	Advent Carol Service by Candlelight (6.30 pm) YPF Christmas Presentation and Sunday Club Nativity Play (10 am) Service of Nine Lessons and Carols (6.30 pm)
Christmas Eve	Crib Service (4 pm)
Sunday 24 th December	Midnight Communion Service (11.30 pm)
Christmas Day	All Together Christmas Communion (10 am)

Events

Saturday 4 th March	Wedding Preparation morning
Tuesday 7 th March	5-session Tuesday evening Lent course begins
Saturday 8 th April	Spring cleaning of the Church
Sunday 30th April	APCM (11.45 am), followed by lunch in the Church Centre
Sunday 14 th May	Christian Aid Week begins
Monday 29 th May	Village Fete/Bank Holiday
Saturday 17 th June	St. Bartholomew's Church Fair (2 pm)
Fri 7 th - Sun 9 th July	Youth Weekend at Kench Hill
Saturday 9 th September	Friends of Kent Churches Sponsored Ride and Stride
Saturday 25 th November	Christmas Market
Sunday 10 th December	Choir Christmas Concert (7 pm)

FROM ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH



REDECORATION AND RE-ORDERING UPDATE

Our Faculty Application has been submitted to the Diocesan Registry and we are currently waiting to hear back from the Chancellor of the Diocese. We will keep you up to date with how things progress.

BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP NOTES

Subscriptions for Study Notes covering the period May 2017-April 2018 are due this month and the cost is £13.20 for three issues. If you wish to join this scheme, please let Margaret Lidbetter have a cheque, made payable to 'Bible Reading Fellowship' as soon as possible. If you have any queries about the scheme, please contact Margaret on 01959 524831.

YOU ARE INVITED - Members of St. Bartholomew's Church are invited to join our friends at Otford Methodist Church on **Wednesday, 22nd February at 2.30 pm.** After a brief look at the music for this year's Women's World Day of Prayer service, to be held on Friday, 3rd March (see below), Revd. John Butt will speak about "A Christian getting onto the radio". Refreshments will be served afterwards. All are welcome.

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

This service, will be held on **Friday, 3rd March at 2.00 pm at St. Bartholomew's Church.** The service will be followed by refreshments. Everyone is welcome to this ecumenical event.

GREECE IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PAUL

23rd - 31st October 2017

Together with Revd. Andrew Procter, the Vicar will be leading a nine-day pilgrimage to Greece next October half-term, visiting sites closely connected with the ministry of St. Paul and the growth of the early Church as recorded in his letters and the Book of Acts, including Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens and Corinth. Information sheets and booking forms are available at the back of church.

ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH FAIR

This will take place on **Saturday 17th June at 2pm, on and around The Green.** Please put the date in your diary!



Registers



BAPTISM (Our Welcome)

15th Jan Frederick George Alexander **Skinner**

15th Jan Jasper William Arthur **Skinner**

(Baptised at St. Peter and St. Paul, Shoreham)

FUNERAL (Our Sympathy)

9th Jan Sidney Edward **Speer** (aged 89)

27th Jan Richard Eric **Dilley** (aged 66)



DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS

Telephone: 01732 227000 www.sevenoaks.gov.uk
Cllr.Lowe@sevenoaks.gov.uk <http://michellelowe.yourcllr.com>



Although we are already in February, a moment from Christmas still remains prominent in my mind. It was while we, as a family, were flicking through the pages of the Radio Times to decide on our Christmas viewing, that my attention was drawn to the Archbishop of Canterbury's article about the homeless, particularly as homelessness in the District forms part of my responsibilities.

I am very proud of the fact that in Sevenoaks we rarely have any rough sleepers, and usually only ever have less than five families (often none) in bed and breakfast accommodation. This is not due to the fact that we are an affluent district as we have pockets of severe deprivation, and rural poverty is often more isolating than urban poverty. Swanley St Mary's is one of the most deprived wards in the country. So we do have to deal with very real poverty.

As a council, Sevenoaks has always been proactive in dealing with the causes of homelessness, and trying to prevent it from occurring in the first place. The causes are many and varied ranging from extreme debt, not being able to manage money, mental health conditions to domestic violence and abuse.

Our Housing, Energy, Re-training Options (HERO) officers see people at the point when debt is starting to spiral out of control or when they are still sofa surfing at the homes of

friends and family, or at the refuges - to try to get them on their feet at that point.

You may have seen just before Christmas that Theresa May announced a new £40 million programme to provide an innovative approach to tackling homelessness with prevention at its heart – focussing on the underlying issues that can lead to someone losing their home.

I am delighted to report that Sevenoaks District Council was the only single district council to successfully win nearly £100,000 for three years to employ another HERO officer and upskill all our HERO officers into Super HEROs. Our new Super HEROs will have some medical training to better understand the links between health and homelessness. Mental health and debt are linked, obesity and poor budgeting skills can also be linked and the list goes on. From 2017, our HERO officers will be able to continue the successful job they are currently doing as well as understanding how best to signpost people with underlying health issues to the right places.

I hope that the Archbishop of Canterbury would bless the homelessness prevention work that we are doing locally – and I hope that we will be able to spread the good practice of HERO to other local authorities so that together we can really start tackling the causes of homelessness before people are in bed and breakfast, or even worse – sleeping rough on the streets.

With best wishes,

Michelle

South India Trek Challenge

11th to 20th November 2016

In November last year I completed another MacMillan trek challenge and I'd like to share with you some of its highlights. I have also prepared a power point presentation and a DVD of the trek should you wish to see them.

Friday 4th November - Pam and I travelled to Kochi Airport, Kerala, South India from Gatwick via Dubai, a journey taking thirteen hours. We spent next nine days touring parts of Kerala visiting Varkala Beach, Kumarakom, Thekkady, Munnar and back to Kochi.

Saturday 12th November - The Trek party arrived at the Fort Queen Hotel, Kochin from Heathrow at 6.00pm. The party consisted twelve ladies, nine men, two UK guides, a doctor from Discover Adventure and one Macmillan rep. I had trekked with ten of the party previously.

We had a meal and evening briefing and retired for bed.

Sunday - Leaving the hotel at 9.00am we said goodbye to Pam who enjoyed the next five days on a bespoke tour and were joined by two local guides who gave us a tour of the local sites in Kochin before making a five-hour coach journey to Munnar, a town situated high in the hills and tea plantations. We settled into the hotel for a meal and further briefing.

Monday - After a stocking up with water we were taken by Jeep to the start of our day trek in hot and misty weather. We ascended gradually through the tea plantations, our trail climbing up into the seven Malia Hills passing coffee and cardamom plantations. We reached the top where we should have enjoyed views over Mt Anamudi and the Chittapura Dam were it not for the mist.

We returned to our hotel. An eight mile trek over a seven hour day.

Tuesday - We left the hotel at 8.30am, after breakfast, and travelled in the jeeps on a drive up through the forest tracks to the Silent Valley plateau and Camp Malia, our camp site for the next night. The trek resumed on the forest track climbing steadily to some local cottages.



Onwards and upwards on grassy trails over many large and steep humps eventually leading to the Meesapulima peak at 2630 metres (8629 ft).

Again we could not enjoy the view due to the mist and returned to the campsite arriving in the dark. A long day's trekking over eight hours and nine miles in the continuing hot and moist weather.

Wednesday - Rising at 6.00am and packing our kit, after breakfast we continued the trek on a steep path that led to the forest track used the day before. We turned off this track across the plateau of the Western Ghats and through stunning scenery with thick red rhododendrons. The trek finished again in the dark at Top Station at 1930 metres (6332 ft). The weather again was hot sun with mist and rain to finish the day. The



new camp site was a field below Top Station which was historically a key shipment station for tea and a viewpoint. A hard and long day of eight hours over fourteen miles.

Thursday - Rising at 6.00 am we set out to complete our trek. Leaving the camp site at 8.30am and starting the long downhill trek, we passed through a local village, visiting the school, rubber, tea, spice and coffee plantations before arriving at the village of Kotakuddi at Bottom Station. The temperature rose as we ascended to the lower levels. We had crossed the border into a different state and had to wait while our guides negotiated a permit to leave Tamil Nadu and re-enter Kerala. At the end of our trek we arrived at two river crossings which had to be negotiated before we reached our finish point and the trucks back to our waiting coach which took us to Thekkedy and our hotel for the night.

A day's trek of eight hours over nine miles in hot and dry weather.

Friday - From Thekkedy we were taken by coach to Alleppey where we boarded a houseboat for a 24 hour cruise along the serene backwaters, a network of lagoons, rivers and canals lined with coconut palms and dazzling green rice paddies.

Saturday - We left our houseboat and drove a short distance to a hotel in the coastal fishing

village of Mararikulam where we found white sandy beaches and had time to relax in the sun and enjoy the beach before our celebration meal to mark the end of the trek.

Sunday - An early morning start for the trekkers who flew back to London. Pam and I continued our holiday together. We stayed 2 nights in a farmstay at Thodupuzha before returning home.

Pam and I were driven by Joseph throughout our stay from airport arrival to departure. He looked after us well, was our guide, interpreter and money changer through the difficult period of the government declaring our 1000 and 500 rupee notes invalid on our third day in India.

Thank you for your support to Macmillan which provides much needed services in cancer care.

You helped me to achieve in excess of £4165 and the combined total for all the group is over £120,000.

The trek was a real challenge but worth all the effort of training and fund raising. The scenery throughout was spectacular. I completed the first, second, part of the third and the entire fourth day's trek.

Tony Grogan

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**

FAITH IN THE FAMILY...

February: Love story

Pause for thought: Take time to read the story of Ruth and Boaz on p14. You can read their full story in the Book of Ruth, which only consists of four short chapters. Theirs is a gentle love story, full of compassion and honourable conduct, set amongst hardworking country folk. It is a welcome relief from the violence and power struggles of the preceding book of Judges, and shows God at work in the everyday lives of ordinary people, despite the background of political intrigue.



In February, our thoughts turn to love as we see shop windows displaying hearts and roses, and inside, shelves packed with Valentine's Day cards, perhaps for sending anonymously! All good fun!

However, as parents, we may recognize the serious need for our children to be brought up within the security of long-lasting relationships and for society to be founded on strong family life. Yet do we share our own experiences (whether good or bad) with the children in our lives in order to help them make good choices and achieve long and happy relationships themselves? In today's world, where the "selfie" seems to be all-important, how can we demonstrate that our outward appearance is less important to others than the state of our hearts and the sort of people we are?

The following family activities might provide some conversation starters and fun activities as we approach St Valentine's Day.

Ruth and Boaz: Read the Bible story on p14 together, perhaps using a heart shape as a visual aid. Wonder about the story as follows:



I wonder how many love stories there are in this Bible story

I wonder what you think attracted Ruth and Boaz to each other

I wonder whether God meant Ruth and Boaz to be together

I wonder what you think helps two people to live together happily

Make a Valentine's Day card: Fold a large rectangular piece of paper in four and lay it in front of you as if it were a greetings card. Now draw a heart shape on some cardboard and cut it out to use as a template. It should be the right size to fit on the front of the card.

Open your card, place the template on the centre fold and draw around it. Now ask an adult to cut around the top half of the heart, so that it pops up when the card is opened.

Place the template on the front of your card and draw around that too. You could add some more drawings and colour them in. Add a message or poem to tell someone why you love them!

Smaller children could stick scrunched up red tissue paper to a big heart shape, which could then be used to make a card.

Send the card to someone you love. Will you sign it?

How did you meet? On a long car journey, or round the table, parents/partners could tell the story of how they met. What attracted you to each other? Was this to do with personal qualities, or appearance, or both? Did anyone else help to bring you together? Why did you decide to make a commitment to each other? What things do you always agree about? What things do you think differently about? How do you deal with this?



On a wintry February afternoon, bring out your wedding photos and have a look through them together. If it was a church wedding, why did you want to marry in church?

Today, many couples meet each other online. What does everyone think could be the advantages and pitfalls of this? Think about a couple you may know who make a great team. Why do you think it works so well?

Recipe for love! Invest in some heart-shaped cookie cutters in different sizes. Invite some friends or grandparents to tea and make them some scrambled egg with heart-shaped pieces of toast on top. You could make heart-shaped biscuits or a sponge cake or no-bake biscuit cake made in a large heart-shaped tin. Perhaps you can find a good recipe on the Internet. While you are busy, see if you can make up a recipe for a happy marriage! For example, you will need:

1 cup of kindness

1 cup of forgiveness

a good pinch of patience

a dollop of going out when you feel like staying in, etc

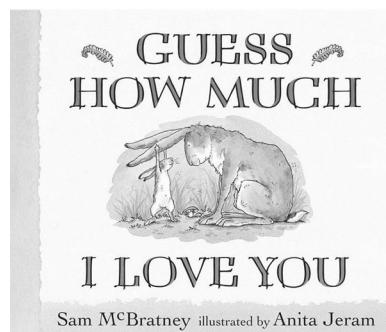
METHOD

Take two people with similar interests and . . .
Mix in a cup of . . . etc!

Welcome to our nest! This is a good time of year to make or buy a nesting box to encourage birds to visit your garden. A box with a small entrance hole may attract a Blue Tit, whereas a House Sparrow will prefer a larger one. The box should be fixed to a wall that is covered with a climbing plant and the entrance should face north or east as direct sunlight may kill baby birds. It should be more than 2m from the ground, out of the reach of cats. Watch out for visiting birds and see if they bring nesting material and then food for their young.

Bedtime story: Borrow a picture book about love from the library, such as *Guess how much I love you* by Sam McBratney or *Bear in Love* by Daniel Pinkwater. Talk about how much God loves us and say a prayer to thank him for all the ways he shows his love for us, for instance by making our wonderful world, providing us with food, sending us Jesus to be our friend, etc.

Vicki Howie



Sam McBratney illustrated by Anita Jeram

IN CONVERSATION WITH...SYLVIA GRAFTON

Long standing choir member, flower arranger and super- industrious fund raiser...

Describing her parents as 'Scousers', Sylvia told me that they moved from Liverpool 'over the water' to the Wirral before she was born. She was brought up in a traditional village called Great Sutton which she said was a wonderful place surrounded by farmland. She has many happy memories of adventures with her brother and other village children roaming the local countryside, building dens and playing cowboys and Indians!

At home, Sylvia's firmly Christian parents were unfailingly kind and supportive but enforced high standards of discipline. Good diction and manners were expected at all times. Any lapse in behaviour would be met by 'the look' from her father which was all it took to restore order. On Sundays, which were always kept special, there would be no playing outdoors. Instead the family would attend church four times, undertaking a three mile round trip on foot, across the fields, for each service.

Thanks to tuition from her mother, a gifted needlewoman and cook, by the age of five Sylvia had learnt to knit. By the age of nine she could produce a family bake and was able to knit an entire jumper. By the time she went to secondary school she could make her own clothes. Her mother also taught her to 'make money stretch like elastic' and at one time Sylvia not only made all her own clothes but also clothing for her children, Alun and Judy.

Sylvia has used the skills learnt from her mother throughout her life - something from which we as a church have greatly benefitted. One only

has to think of the exceptional crafts she makes in such quantity for the Summer Fair and the Christmas Market, or of her beautiful flower arrangements which so enhance worship in St Bart's, or of the symbolic Christingle oranges she organises each December which delight and help educate our children, or of the wonderful festival white and gold altar frontal (dedicated in 1992) which Sylvia, as one of a team, helped embroider. Along the way, through use of her talents, she has raised tens of thousands of pounds for church funds as well as an impressive amount for the Children's Society. She has also made a big contribution to church life through her many years' service as a Sunday School teacher and through her ongoing involvement with Messy Church.

In addition to her other activities, Sylvia managed to have two careers, both of which she loved. The first began at the age of 17 when she left West Kirby High School and went to Clatterbridge General Hospital as a nurse cadet. She then moved to Dartford to train as a State



Sylvia Grafton

Registered Nurse (SRN) qualifying in 1959. Sylvia nursed for fourteen years and only stopped fulltime work when her mother died and her father and brother came to live with her. She also had her two small children from her first marriage to care for so working long shifts, nights and weekends became unfeasible. Instead she began her second career; she went to Dartford College of Education and, after three years, qualified as a teacher. She then spent many contented years teaching the reception class at Crockenhill Primary School. The fact that she was a popular teacher was demonstrated when she married Kevin in 1972 and all her class, as well as their parents, turned up at Gravesend Registry Office for the ceremony. She said it was 'a very relaxed and happy event'.

Singing was another talent nurtured in Sylvia's childhood when all the family regularly sang together. Sylvia and her brother took formal singing lessons and, after her father and brother moved south, the two men both joined the choir of Holy Trinity Church, Dartford. It was through this church that Sylvia met Kevin, who was also in the choir, and their love of music has been a feature of their married life together; for the past 37 years Sylvia has been in the St Bart's choir, and Kevin has been its organist and choirmaster. Over this period the Church congregation has been privileged to hear first class music and many superb anthems; we are indeed fortunate to have what must be one of the finest village church choirs anywhere.

Sylvia has worked hard all her life and believes it is essential, whatever happens, just to get on with things. Her faith has always been supremely important to her and never more so than when her daughter Judy, who was 37 at the time, fell ill and died. Just eighteen months

later her only brother also died. Throughout this terrible time her faith was never shaken and overall she considers her life has been blessed. Reflecting on the good things, she recounted how, when she was asked by the Church to accept Maundy Money from the Queen, she felt that others were more deserving. However she agreed to accept the money on behalf of all the people she has nursed and taught because they have helped to make her who she is today and have vastly enriched her life. Through her work, crafts and music, she has undoubtedly enriched the lives of countless others too.

Christeen Malan



Sylvia and Kevin Grafton

ANCIENT WISDOM - MODERN LIVES

Ruth and Boaz - a love story (Book of Ruth)

Obed wasn't ready to sleep yet.

"Can I have a bedtime story?" he asked his mother Ruth.

"Of course," she replied, sitting on his bed.
"Which one?"

Obed thought quickly. "Tell me the one about how you met Dad."

Ruth laughed. "A long one! Well, as you know, I used to live in Moab, where there was plenty of food. One day, I met a lovely lady called Naomi . . ."

"You mean Grammie Nammie!"

"Yes! God brought her to Moab to find food for her family. Sadly her husband died. But my sister and I married her two sons."

"So you were married before you met Dad?"

"That's right. But my husband died soon and so did his brother."

"Poor Grammie Nammie," said Obed, frowning.
"No husband and no sons."

"I know," said Ruth. "It was a terrible time, but my sister and I took good care of her. Then one day, she felt God wanted her to come back here."

"To Bethlehem?"

"Yes. She heard that the fields were bursting with crops again."

"And so you came with her."

"Yes, I did. She said I didn't have to – but by then I really loved her and I told her 'wherever you go, I'll go too!'"

"I bet Grammie was pleased," said Obed. "But

what about my Dad?"

"Well, I first saw Boaz when I went to work in his fields. People who were poor and hungry like us were allowed to follow the men gathering in the harvest and pick up any leftover stalks of grain."

"Did he say anything to you?"

"Yes," said Ruth. "He noticed me straight away and asked his workers who I was. Then he came over and told me that his servant girls would look after me. He even told me to have a drink from the water jars and to help myself to bread at meal times." Ruth smiled. "I thought he was such a kind man."

The story was interrupted by Boaz himself, coming in from the farm.

"Not asleep yet, young man?" he teased, wagging a finger at his young son.

Obed yawned. "Nearly! Just tell me - what did you think of Mum when you first met her?"

Boaz sat down on the bed, next to his wife.
"Well, I'd heard all about her great kindness to Grammie. And I could see she was brave and hardworking. I felt that I wanted to protect her."

"So you got married!" said Obed, grinning.

"Well, they needed a bit of help from this old lady!" boasted Grammie, looking round the door.

Obed felt his eyes closing. "Not just you, Grammie!" he said sleepily. "I think God had a lot to do with it too!"

Vicki Howie



MISSION MATTERS: FEBA

Programmes about health and hygiene, marriage and family life, agriculture and environmental issues are just some of the content included by Feba in radio programmes helping listeners transform their lives and communities.

Support in Mozambique

Feba works in partnership with local people in a variety of situations. One way we help is by using radio to give access to information and advice. *Radio Wimbe* in Pemba, Mozambique, broadcasts daily programmes helping the community address issues by engaging listeners in discussion and encouraging co-operation to work for change.

For example, a vegetable seller in the market thanked *Radio Wimbe* for its programmes about cleaning up litter. He joined a group to clean up in the market everyday before the beginning of its activity, helping to improve the health and hygiene of the area.

A widow helped in Nepal

In Nepal, it is common for people to work abroad, especially young men looking for ways to support their families or find a career. But very often they are exploited by unscrupulous agencies. *Afno FM*, Feba's project with local partner HDCS, regularly air programmes giving advice to those thinking of travelling abroad.

"I wish my son had heard those programmes" said Ishori, a widow who grows various produce to support her family. Her son went to work abroad but never managed to send home any money as he had intended. He was still there earning the airfare home. She believed that if he had heard those programmes he would have been better prepared. Ishori also learnt from the programmes giving agricultural advice which has helped her to start farming and join together with other small farmers in her village. They help each other by paying into a collective so that they can offer each other loans.

Helen Casiot



LATER ANGLO-SAXON OTFORD

In the early Saxon period Kent had its own kings. It was to the court of King Ethelbert in Canterbury that St Augustine was sent by the Pope in order to introduce Christianity to England (597AD).

There was probably a sub-kingdom of Western Kent, subject to Canterbury, and the consecration of the first bishop of Rochester by St Augustine may reflect the presence of this western kingdom. Fourteen hundred years later, Otford is still in the diocese of Rochester.

The early Saxon royal courts were mobile, and stayed at royal “vills” such as Canterbury and Lyminge. Interestingly, a Saxon site with a large hall has been excavated at Eynsford, only 4 miles north of Otford. This too may have been a royal vill. In 776 Offa, ruler of the Midlands kingdom of Mercia, invaded Kent. The first recorded use of the name Otford appears in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle; “...the same year the Mercians and the Kentishmen fought at Otford; and wondrous serpents were seen in the land of the South Saxons”. This was the “First Battle of Otford”. It is likely Offa was unsuccessful on this occasion, as the Kings of Kent still minted coins for several years. However, Offa eventually took full control of Kent by 785, and Mercia then ruled much of southern England.

In the 9C the power of Mercia waned. Kent then became a province of the kingdom of Wessex (King Alfred the Great being the most famous King of Wessex). By the 10C Kent was part of the unified Kingdom of England. The “Second Battle of Otford” was fought in 1016 between the English under King Edmund Ironside and the invading Danes under Cnut (Canute) (refought in an enactment at the 2016 village fete!). When Edmund charged there was a mass slaughter and the Danes fled to Sheppey. However, this was only a temporary victory as later that year Cnut became King of all England. There has been much speculation about the exact site of the two battles of Otford, but the truth is that we don’t know.

It was common for nobility to gift land to the Church. In 821 the Mercian King Cenulf granted to Wulfred, the Archbishop of Canterbury, land in the vicinity of Otford. In 822 Wulfred was granted further land by Coelwulf, the new King of Mercia. These and other lands later became part of the archbishop’s great medieval estate (“manor”) of Otford. The late Anglo-Saxon manor house would have been near the church, but we lack written accounts for the village in this period. These manors would normally have a farmyard, hall, kitchen, bell tower, church and ancillary buildings,



Anglo-Saxon peasants

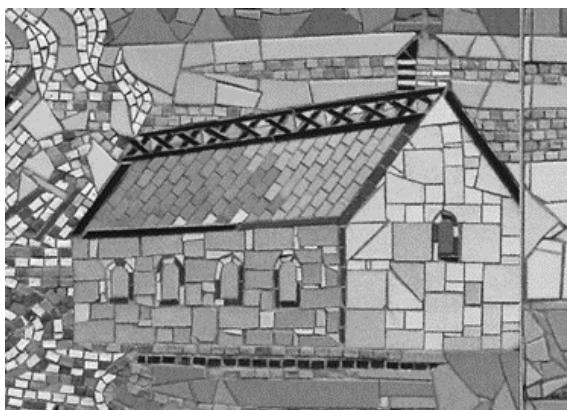
often surrounded by a boundary. Rubbish and human waste would have been kept in surface refuse heaps (middens), and then used for manuring the fields.

The Anglo-Saxon period ended with the conquest of England in 1066 by William and his Norman army. William commissioned an extensive land survey known to us as the Domesday Book (1086). It is difficult to know how much is applicable to the present parish of Otford, as "Otford manor" at that stage was a complex church estate containing land in other parishes. In addition to the archbishop, three Norman knights also held lands here, but there is no mention of the unfortunate Anglo-Saxons who lost their land. The manor contained 6 watermills for grinding corn, 2 of which were likely to have been in Otford itself. The archbishop owned extensive woodland and meadows, and the whole manor supported 360 oxen making up 45 8-ox plough-teams.

In Otford there is little material evidence from the Anglo-Saxon period. The original church was probably built of wood, and in the 11C was rebuilt in stone with a small nave. The church has since been much enlarged and altered, but

the north-western corner (quoin) of the original nave is still visible from the exterior (and contains tiles recycled from a nearby Roman villa). The few palace remains we now see are from Archbishop Warham's 16C rebuilding of an earlier medieval palace, with no traces of the yet earlier Anglo-Saxon manor house. Villagers from 11C Otford would now be amazed at the number of buildings, and by the increase in population (over 20 times greater). They would be surprised at the few people needed to work the land, but they would recognise the river hay meadows and the wheat (shorter than they were used to). They would recognise the sheep and cattle (enormous to their eyes) in the fields, and might even recognise some of the field boundaries. The woodland would look familiar, although no pigs now graze there, and some trees such as sycamore would be unfamiliar. In the church, prayers are said (in a language with Anglo-Saxon roots) for a monarch crowned in an abbey founded by a Saxon king. Anglo-Saxon influences are alive and well in Otford!

Charles Shee



Otford Church about 1050, as depicted on Otford Mosaic

OUT AND ABOUT...



GUIDE CHRISTMAS POST BOX

Thank you to all who supported the 2016 Christmas Guide Post Box

in Otford Library and the Parish Council Office. This again was a success and raised in total £478-96p which has been sent to the girls' chosen charities – "Kent Friendz" supporting children and adults with learning disabilities, and "Smokey Paws" dogs and cats oxygen masks for Firemen in Sevenoaks.

A big thank you to Angela in the Library and Sue in the Parish Office for helping us, also to Gerry Froggatt and Craig who continue every year to print the stamps and posters for us.

OTFORD EVENING WI

February 9th is Quiz Night at Otford Evening WI. Time to sharpen up the little grey cells with a bit of

quiz fun. We meet at 7.30pm in the Club Room of the Memorial Hall and visitors are most welcome to join us. If you need any further information please contact our President on 01959 524831

HOSPICES OF HOPE

One of St Bart's mission charities, Hospices of Hope, is looking for keen volunteers to help at their Summer Trips in Romania.

Children suffering from rare or life-limiting conditions are often completely neglected in the Romanian health care system and children experiencing trauma as a result of the death of

a parent or sibling are often socially marginalised. The Summer Trips are an opportunity for these children to remember what it is like to be a kid again, to receive respite, to share stories and find comfort in each other and ultimately have a time that offers normality in their displaced world. We are looking for enthusiastic volunteers to join our team, with a variety of ages (minimum 16), skills and interests to help us organise these trips and give the children a holiday to remember! Volunteers are asked to raise £700 (£550 for one trip) to cover costs.

Please visit <http://www.hospicesofhope.co.uk/overseas-volunteers/> or contact Anna Perolls on 01959 525110 | anna@hospicesofhope.co.uk for more information.



The treasurer still had a trick up his sleeve

PUZZLE PAGE

The Queen's Accession

65 years ago this month, King George VI died in the night between 5th & 6th February 1952, while at Sandringham. In far away Kenya, his daughter, Elizabeth, was proclaimed sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II. Proclamations were then made in different realms on 6, 7, 8 and 11 February, depending on geographical location and time zone.

On 6th February The Accession Council issued for publication in that day's London Gazette, a statement which began : 'WHEREAS it has pleased Almighty God to call to His Mercy our late Sovereign Lord King George the Sixth of Blessed and Glorious memory, by whose Decease the Crown is solely and rightfully come to the High and Mighty Princess Elizabeth Alexandra Mary..." and a new chapter in British and Commonwealth history had begun.



Sixty	Elizabeth	History
Five	Sovereign	Whereas
Years	Proclamations	Almighty
King	Realms	God
George	Accession	Mercy
Died	Council	Blessed
February	London	Glorious
Kenya	Gazetter	
Daughter	British	

BEACOM FAMILY FAVOURITES

Steamed Apple Sponge Pudding

Ingredients

1 large cooking apple
1 tsp sugar
1 tsp water
Squeezy bottle golden syrup
100g caster sugar
100g margarine
2 eggs
150g self raising flour
Little milk if required

Method

Grease a 2 pint pudding basin

Squeeze about 2 tablespoons of golden syrup into the basin Peel, core and slice the apple and place in a separate container with a cover in the microwave with the water and sugar for about two and a half minutes until soft. Add this apple mix on top of the syrup in the basin.

Make the sponge by creaming the sugar and margarine together until pale. Add the eggs slowly, continue beating until incorporated.

Gently fold in the sifted flour, add a little milk if required.

Put cake mix on top of the syrup and apple.

Cover the basin with a layer of greaseproof paper and a layer of foil. Secure the covering with string under the rim of the basin. Trim off any extra.

You can use a steamer or, like me, a large lidded saucepan with about two inches of water and an old saucer in the bottom.

Steam or boil for one and a half hours, top up water if necessary.

Serve with golden syrup and custard - delicious on cold winter days!

Enjoy!



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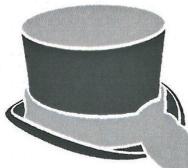
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CHURCH COUNCIL

The Vicar and the Churchwardens Margaret Lidbetter* and Russell Edwards, Samantha Barnett, Joan Beacom, Cindy Davies, Dawn Hallam*, Andrew Hill, Mark Holmes, Vicki Howie, Janet Hunt*, Mike Jones, Bill Lattimer, Nick Page, Derek Shilling#, Mags Southgate, Anne Stevens, Mark Tierney,