

St Bartholomew's Church, Oxford Parish News



SERVICES AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

Due to the reordering and redecoration of the church, all services will be held in the Church Centre until mid April

March	8am	10am		6.30pm
4 March 3rd Sunday of Lent	Holy Communion	All Together Worship	-	Evensong
11 March 4th Sunday of Lent Mothering Sunday	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	-	-
18 March 5th Sunday of Lent	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	-	Evensong
25 March Palm Sunday	Holy Communion (BCP)	Palm Sunday Procession (10.45am)	Messy Church (3 pm)	-
29 March Maundy Thursday	-	-	-	Holy Communion at the Methodist Church (8pm)
30 March Good Friday	-	All Together Worship	Last Hour at the Cross (2pm)	-

SUNDAY CLUB (FOR AGES 0-14)

INFANT: 3-7

JUNIOR: 8-11

SENIOR: 12-14

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 Hall.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S FELLOWSHIP meet every Sunday evening during term time in the Church Hall, 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.

Cover photo by Richard Worssam: Floss the Flamingo and Friends
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VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

A few years ago, on a visit to see some of Donna's relatives in Kentucky, we were driving down a road when we passed a man who had parked in a lay-by and from the back of his truck he was selling guns to passers-by. What a contrast to here where, on the road between Shoreham and Eynsford, we might see a lady in the lay-by opposite the lavender farm selling strawberries or cherries from the back of her car!



The issue of gun control has raised its head again in the States after the terrible shooting at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida on Valentine's Day which left 17 dead and 14 wounded. This month, on 24th March, there will be a planned march in Washington as part of the "March for our Lives" campaign, backed by Oprah Winfrey, George Clooney and others.

Many young people are raising awareness of the issue through social media. Alex Wind, one of the students who survived the attack in Parkland, has written in support of the "Never Again" campaign, "It is absolutely insane that a 19-year old cannot purchase alcohol but can walk in and buy an AR15 - a weapon of war, by all means a weapon of mass destruction."

The statistics are staggering. Last year alone in America there were 25 million gun ownership applications, and there are approximately 270 million guns in circulation. Sometimes it comes close to home. Last summer Donna, Matthew, and I visited the famous Las Vegas strip on our way back from a trip to see the Grand Canyon; just a few weeks later 58 people were killed and over 500 people were injured when a gunman opened fire from his hotel room on a outdoor country music festival being held on the strip.

You wonder why no significant action has been taken up until now. The shooting at Parkland, Florida, is the sixth school incident this year alone (and we're only a few weeks in) in which students have been killed or injured. Some have pointed out that a number of senior politicians who have publicly expressed their "thoughts and prayers" have also received substantial

sums from the National Rifle Association towards their election campaigns. In the recent Presidential Election, Donald Trump's campaign received \$11.4 million.

I'm writing about this issue this month because amongst all the coverage of the shooting what caught my attention in particular were the actions of some of the staff at the High School, especially those who gave their lives in seeking to protect their students. Scott Beigal, a geography teacher, was killed while attempting to barricade a classroom door. Another, Aaron Feis, the school's assistant American football coach, jumped in front of students to shield them from the bullets. He was taken to hospital but died from his wounds. A social media post stated, "He selflessly shielded students from the shooter when he was shot. He died a hero and he will forever be in our hearts and memories."

At the end of this month, on 30th March, we observe Good Friday. On this day we remember how Jesus took upon himself the forces of sin and evil as he gave his life for the world and was crucified upon a cross. His, also, was a selfless action which saved others and for which he paid the supreme price of his own life.

Whilst we won't be physically taking part in the "March for our Lives", on 24th March, let us nonetheless draw inspiration from Christ's action and seek to work for peace and the welfare of others wherever it falls in our power to do so. Next month, on 1st April, we will be celebrating Easter, which affirms that hatred and violence do not have the last word.

Your friend and Vicar, *Richard*

DIARY FOR MARCH 2018

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

- 2 2.00 pm Women's World Day of Prayer (Holy Trinity RC Church, Otford)
3 9.00 am Churchyard Working party

4 The Third Sunday of Lent

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am All Together Worship

3-4.00 pm Otford Junior Choir (Church Centre)

6.30 pm Evensong

- 5 7.45 pm CAMEO (17 Leonard Avenue)
6 8.00 pm Parish Lent group led by Dawn Hallam (Church Centre)
7 9.30 am 'First Steps' (Otford Methodist Church Hall)
10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) (Rev. Chris Reed)

**10 Magazine material for the April edition by today, please, to the
Church Office, st.bartholomews@otford.net**

6.00 pm EPIC (Church Hall)

11 The Fourth Sunday of Lent: Mothering Sunday

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Holy Communion

- 12 12 noon Soup Lunch (Church Centre)
7.45 pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)
13 8.00 pm Parish Lent group led by the Vicar (Church Centre)
14 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) refreshments afterwards

18 The Fifth Sunday of Lent: Passion Sunday

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Morning Worship

6.30 pm Evensong

- 19 7.45 pm CAMEO (17 Leonard Avenue)
20 8.00 pm Parish Lent group led by Chris Reed & Margaret Lidbetter (Church Centre)
21 9.30 am 'First Steps' Easter Service (Otford Methodist Church Hall)
10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) (Rev. Chris Reed)
7.45 pm PCC meeting (Church Centre)

BRITISH SUMMER TIME BEGINS

Put clocks forward at 2.00 am on Sunday, 25th March

- 25 **Palm Sunday**
8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.45 am Palm Sunday procession: meet at Methodist Church car park
11.00 am Service on The Green
3.00 pm Messy Church (Church Hall)
- 26 7.45 pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)
- 28 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP), refreshments afterwards
- 29 **Maundy Thursday**
8.00 pm Service of Holy Communion at Otford Methodist Church
- 30 **Good Friday**
10.00 am All Together Worship
2.00 pm The Last Hour at The Cross
7.30 pm Churches Together in Sevenoaks and District: Music and Readings for Good Friday (The Drive Methodist Church, Sevenoaks)



Registers

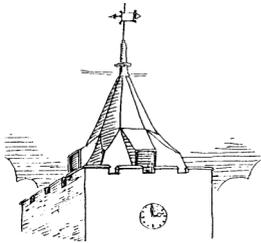


FUNERAL (Our Sympathy)

17th December

Alexa Amelia Mace

FROM ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH



WORSHIP SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS DURING THE RE-ORDERING AND REDECORATION

While the re-ordering and redecoration project is going on, all Sunday services and the Wednesday midweek communion are currently being held in the Church Centre.

The middle and senior Sunday Club groups are meeting in the Vicarage and the junior Sunday Club group is meeting in the Cranmer Room. YPF and EPIC are being held in the Church Hall. Thank you for your understanding and patience over these weeks. The work is progressing well and is scheduled to be completed by mid April. We look forward to worshipping in our newly refurbished church.

OTFORD JUNIOR CHOIR

This will take place on **Sunday, 4th March in the Church Centre** and is for young people aged 8 years and over. Come along and enjoy singing with your friends. For further information contact Chris Bishop on 07746 091517.

PARISH LENT COURSE: COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY OF FAITH

In our Lent Course members of the Readers and Revs team will be sharing with us reflections on a selection of writers, poets and musicians from across the centuries who have been helpful companions for them at various times in their own journeys of faith. The sessions will not just focus on the authors and composers, but will also have a personal element, sharing

stories about particular events or circumstances when they were especially significant and helpful.

The aim is that as we are introduced to these fellow companions of faith we may also want to try journeying with them for a while.

The Parish Lent Course will be held on five Tuesday evenings in Lent, **20th February-20th March from 8-9.30 pm** in the Church Centre.

CHURCHYARD WORKING PARTY

This will take place on **Saturday, 3rd March at 9.00 am**. We are very short of helpers so if you could come for one hour it would make a difference. Come and join in the fun and bring some useful tools, too!

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

This service will be held on **Friday, 2nd March at 2.00 pm at Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church, Otford**. The service will be followed by refreshments. Everyone is welcome to this ecumenical event.

MOTHERING SUNDAY, 11th March

You are warmly invited to our Mothering Sunday services when posies will be offered to ladies in the congregation.

MID-LENT SOUP LUNCH

You are warmly invited to our lunch on **Monday, 12th March from 12-2.00 pm** in the Church Centre. Minimum donation of £5 for home-made soup and bread and a light dessert. Guest: Dawn Hallam.

MESSY CHURCH

The next Messy Church event will take place on **Sunday, 25th March. 3.00 pm in the Church Hall**. An enjoyable afternoon is promised for all who come. It is particularly suitable for families with children up to the age of 11.

THE REAL EASTER EGG

The Real Easter Egg is the only one which has a copy of the Easter story in the box. It communicates the real story of Easter to all generations. The Real Easter Egg was launched in 2010, is made of Fairtrade chocolate and makes a donation to the charity, Traidcraft Exchange, from sales giving at least 10p from the purchase of each 150g egg. Available from Tesco, Morrisons and Waitrose supermarkets. For details see: www.realeasteregg.co.uk

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER EVENTS

Palm Sunday Procession, 25th March, 10.45 am. There will be a united churches' procession, beginning at Otford Methodist Church at 10.45 am and ending with an act of worship on The Green, followed by refreshments in the Church Centre. Palm crosses will be available at all services on that day.

Maundy Thursday, 29th March. There will be a united service of the Last Supper at 8.00 pm at Otford Methodist Church.

Good Friday, 30th March. There will be a service for all ages at 10.00am in the Church Centre and also 'The Last Hour' service of hymns and readings from 2-3.00 pm.

EASTER DAY, 1st April. There will be services of Holy Communion at 8.00 am in the Church Centre and 10.00 am in the **Village Hall**. At 6.30 pm there will be a service of Evensong in the Church Centre. Do join us!

VOCE CONCERT : PILGRIMAGE

Saturday 21st April, St Bart's Church 7.30pm
We are delighted to welcome back this group of former choral scholars (including choir member Mark Holmes) from Trinity College, Cambridge and friends who will sing music from across the centuries.

Tickets at £15 are available from the Church Office, 01959 523185 (mornings only), and include refreshments.

Do come with your friends to hear this talented choir on a Spring evening in our newly refurbished church!



AN EVENING WITH TERRY WAITE

A celebratory event on Saturday 19th May at 6.30pm.

Terry Waite, as the international envoy for the Archbishop of Canterbury during the 1980s, successfully negotiated the release of British hostages, first from Iran and then from Libya. Then, when trying to do the same in Lebanon, he was himself taken captive and held for nearly five years - most of that time in solitary confinement.

To mark the completion of our reordering and redecoration of St Bartholomew's, we will be welcoming Terry to St Bart's, Otford where he will be in conversation with former BBC broadcaster, Nick Page. This will be followed by a reception with canapés, and Terry's books will be available to be bought - and signed.

Tickets for this evening - £20 - are now available from the church office 01959 523185 (mornings only) and Joan Beacom 01959 524304.

GRAVESTONES

You may have noticed that we have had to lay down some of the older headstones in the churchyard. This is for health and safety reasons so that they do not present a risk of falling over and thereby causing injury.

BURNS NIGHT SUPPER

More than sixty people came to the recent Burns Night celebration held in the Church Centre and all had taken seriously the request to wear something Scottish! Guests were met at the door with a tot of whisky, before finding their places at tables named after Scottish Isles. It was cold outside, but the red tartan table runners, napkins and bunting gave a warm glow (or was that the whisky?) and candles burned in amongst the heather in the floral decorations.



Matthew Beacom, our welcoming MC, kept proceedings running smoothly, beginning with Hugh Unsworth's brave address to the steaming haggis! Joan Beacom and her team of ladle-brandishing chefs provided a hearty and delicious Scottish meal (smoked salmon canapés, Crofter's Pie with vegetables, Cranachan, cheese and grapes) and the various courses were interspersed with some homegrown entertainments. These included a song, with words by Burns, sung by Mark Holmes and accompanied by Penny Beacom on the piano. The two also led some communal songs, the Skye Boat Song and Auld Lang Syne. Nick Page read a fantastic précis of 'The Scottish Play', all in clever verse! In quieter moments (not many!), guests completed a table quiz for a small prize and there was a raffle too. Douglas Howie gave the toast to the lassies!

This event was planned by the Events Team (Joan Beacom, Sam Barnett, Vicki Howie, Nick Page, Anne Stevens and Iona Unsworth) and they would like to thank all those who helped and supported the event, raising nearly £1400 for General Church Funds. They are always delighted to hear your ideas for events or to give you support in running your own event. They would urge you to support the **Voce Concert on 21st April** and **An Evening with Terry Waite on 19th May** (see p.7). Many of you have asked for the Cranachan recipe – so here it is!

Vicki Howie

Toast 100g jumbo porridge oats, 100g light muscovado sugar and knob butter in saucepan over high heat until crisp (about 4 mins). Allow to cool. Whip 300mls double cream and 250g mascarpone cheese in big bowl until it forms soft peaks. Gently fold in 300g raspberries, 2/3rds toasted oats mixture and whisky, if using. Serve in individual glass dishes with remaining oats and extra raspberries sprinkled on top. (Serves 8. Based on recipe from Mary Berry's *BBC Country House Secrets*.)



MISSION MATTERS ... HOSPICES OF HOPE

Mission Link Partner update March 2018.

St Bartholomew's Church Otford continues to support Hospices of Hope as a mission partner. The charity based in the village of Otford has, since its beginnings in 1992, grown into the leading hospice care organisation in South East Europe.

Over this time the organisation has facilitated care for more than 40,000 patients in Romania, Moldova and Serbia. They have also trained more than 20,000 health care professionals from all over Central and Eastern Europe.

News from Romania:

Currently work continues in Romania where Hospice Casa Sperantei looks forward to opening its unique centre at Copaceni this year. This facility will support and help children and young people suffering with rare or life limiting conditions and will include therapy services, respite care and emergency accommodation for families with children who are ill who also face homelessness.

The organisation faces challenges in this country where 40% of people live below the poverty line. It is estimated that approximately 50% of doctors have left Romania in recent years leading to a shortage of medical staff. In addition, the Romanian government increased nurses' salaries by 60% resulting in significant and unforeseen increases in costs.

News from Moldova:

The Hospices of Hope charity in Moldova has officially opened where it is hoped that a national support network, offering resources to small and vulnerable hospice teams, can be created. Education and training will be an

essential part of this plan.

The largest of these rural Hospice teams is based in Orhei where 11-part time staff care for 80 patients a year, making more than 1,300 home visits annually. Its work is carried out on an annual budget of just under £17,000.

Hospice Angelus in Soroca and Hospice Angelus in Ocnita are smaller. Soroca has a team of 5 and cares for 50 patients annually and Ocnita has 4 employees and 25 patients a year.

News from Serbia:

In 2017 work on the new hospice building in Belgrade started. The initial phase of this project will provide home care and educational facilities for the first time to patients in Serbia which has the highest cancer mortality rate in Europe.

By the end of 2018 a 12-bedded in-patient wing will, when completed, be able to provide a facility for 500 admissions per year. The service will also be able to offer 2,500 home care visits and 600 outpatient consultations per year.

In their first Prayer Letter of 2018 Hospices of Hope reflect and give thanks for all they have achieved so far and for the work that lies ahead. They ask us to pray for the teams in different countries, their work, successes and challenges.

More information on the valuable work of this organisation can be found at

www.hospicesofhope.co.uk

Anne Stevens

FAITH IN THE FAMILY...

March: We have a king who rides a donkey!

Pause for thought: Take time to read the Bible story about Palm Sunday on p14. At the start of



that dramatic Easter week, Jesus arrived in Jerusalem riding on the back of a little donkey. Here was a gentle, people's king, who had come to serve his subjects and knew each one's individual needs.

Later that week, he would make the ultimate sacrifice by giving his life on the Cross.

Sometimes we can feel daunted at the role we have been given as parents, doubting our skills and feeling that we know too little of the Bible to be able to pass our faith on to our children. Yet on Palm Sunday, Jesus rode into Jerusalem in triumph on the back of a young donkey that had never been ridden before. He can do much with the humble gifts we offer him.

The charity *Care for the Family* has just launched its *Kitchen Table Project*, in which it will seek to inspire parents, the biggest influence in their children's lives, to nurture the faith of those children. Parents don't need to be theological experts – but simply to bring God into the everyday things that we are doing anyway with our families. Why not sign up to be part of the online community and receive regular inspiration? (www.kitchentable.org.uk/join) Follow on social media via facebook: ktpcampaign and twitter: @ktpcampaign

Here comes Jesus! Read the Bible story on p.14 together as a family, perhaps around the kitchen

table! (With little children, you could all make a hee-haw sound every time the donkey is mentioned! You could also use your hands as ears and put them forwards and backwards during the story according to whether you think the donkey is feeling scared, curious, or happy.) Chat about the story:

Have you ever been in a big crowd waiting to see someone special? What was it like?

Why do you think Jesus chose to ride on a little donkey?

Jesus needed the little donkey's help. Do you think Jesus needs *our* help sometimes? How does that make you feel?

I wonder why people waved branches of palm?

Do you think Jesus knows each one of us?

On a family walk: Count how many horses and donkeys you see. When you reach an open space, pretend to be a young donkey or horse. What do you look like? What is your name? Practise trotting and galloping around. Swish your tail to get rid of flies! Give a loud neigh or hee-haw!

Jump over puddles and branches! How do you think you would feel in a big noisy crowd? Who would you like to carry on your back?

 **A Palm Sunday Song:** (*To the tune, I hear thunder*)

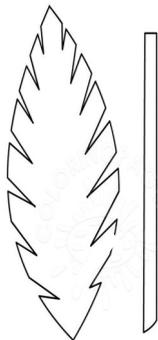
I hear, Jesus, I hear Jesus,

Here he comes, here he comes,

Clip-clop on his donkey, *clip-clop* on his donkey,

Wave your palms, wave your palms! (*Repeat*)

Then shout Hosanna! with arms raised!



Palm Sunday crafts: In biblical times, palm branches were waved to welcome royalty and other important people.

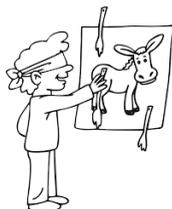
Palm branches: Roll a large rectangle of green or brown paper lengthwise into a tight 'tube' and tape one end. Cut down the tube to

within about 15cm of the taped end, making thin strips. Gently pull up the inner strips until the branch is a good length and shake carefully.

Younger children might like to decorate big green leaf shapes with triangles cut from the edges. These could be stiffened by taping a cardboard tube or cane to the reverse, thus providing a handle.

Bring them along to wave at the Palm Sunday procession on 25th March. We meet at the Methodist Church at 10.45am and walk to the Green for an outdoor service. Do join in!

I was in the crowd! On a large piece of paper, parents or older children draw the profile of a donkey's head with long ears coming in from the right. Now fill the page with lots of circles. As a family, fill these in with your own faces and those of other family members and friends! As you do so, chat about all the noise, joy and excitement there would have been on that Palm Sunday!



Party game: Play *Pin the tail on the donkey!* Chat about working animals, such as police horses. How do you think they deal with noisy crowds and disturbances? The Queen used to take part

in the Trooping the Colour ceremony on horseback. Look it up on the Internet!

Prayer:

At bedtime, make up a story together, pretending you are getting ready to go out to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem. What do you wear? Do you take anything to wave? What is the weather like? What is it like on the streets? What sounds can you hear? Can you see properly over the crowds? Now Jesus is getting close. He is going to pass right by you. What do you think you would like to say to him? It could be a thank you for something, or maybe something you would like to ask. Have a think. Turn this into a prayer.

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for . . . / please could you help me to . . . / I want to tell you about . . .

Thank you that you listen to me and that you know my name, even though you are a king!

Amen

Vicki Howie



IN CONVERSATION WITH ... ROBERT HUNT

An intrepid traveller in his youth!



The second oldest in a Christian family with four children, Robert was born at home in Edgbaston, Birmingham. In 1960 his father's job in personnel with the

chemical company Albright and Wilson took the family to Barnes, London and Robert attended prep school in Putney. However his Northern Irish mother longed to live in the countryside and, in 1966, the Hunts moved to a farmhouse in Groombridge. Robert described it as 'a beautiful place' set in some six acres of grounds and has distinct memories of long hours spent mowing the lawns! From the age of thirteen he boarded at Reed's School in Cobham – an experience he grew accustomed to rather than relished.

Leaving school after O Levels, Robert found employment with a shipping agent's in London. He lived in digs and returned to Groombridge at weekends partly to play tennis and rugby. On turning 21, his parents held a party for him and gave him a cheque which would have allowed him to buy a car. However Robert chose instead to do something altogether more adventurous. Responding to an advert in the Times, he joined



forces with two other young men who had a Land Rover and a map of Africa and together they planned a mammoth expedition, allowing three to four months to reach Cape Town.

Ultimately the journey took seven months though, other than a few unfortunate happenings, it seems to have gone remarkably well. The outset was not auspicious as they had to push their vehicle off the boat in Dieppe but things soon picked up and they made their way through France, Spain and Algeria before crossing the Sahara and travelling on through Niger and Nigeria. A temporary setback occurred in Nigeria when, in attempting a short cut, the Land Rover tipped over in a dried up river bed. Fortunately there were plenty of willing locals to help them right the vehicle though there was then a delay whilst the two other young men (who were cousins) disappeared to procure spare parts for essential repairs. Robert recalls being an object of great fascination to the local people, many of whom had never seen a white man before.

The journey continued through Cameroon, the Central African Republic, former Zaire (where one of the cousins contracted malaria and where the pot holes were 'big enough for a car to disappear'), Rwanda and Northern Tanzania, before they stopped in Kenya staying with an extremely hospitable high court judge – a family friend of the cousins. Despite the unkempt and skinny state of the travelling companions, the judge trusted them enough to lend them his car so that they could explore the area. They also used the Land Rover to go into the game parks in this 'beautiful part of Africa'.

Having sold the Land Rover in Kenya and purchased a VW Combi, the friends then drove through Tanzania, Zambia and Botswana to

arrive in Zimbabwe where Robert's uncle was headmaster of an African boarding school. After enjoying some home comforts, they completed the final leg of the journey to Cape Town where their paths diverged. Instead of returning home, Robert hitched to Durban and found a 'fantastic' job in shipping whilst building up a busy social life through the church he attended. Two years later, in 1976, Robert decided to return home but only after having visited Malawi, Kenya (to revisit the judge), Israel (where he worked on a kibbutz for seven weeks), Turkey, Greece, Italy and Holland.

Unsurprisingly he found it hard to settle back into life in the UK –'everything seemed so small' – so, after just six months, he quit his job in London. He then began work in hospitality at Burrswood, a Christian centre for health and wellbeing set in stunning surroundings on the edge of the Ashdown Forest. Although at first Robert wasn't sure it was the place for him, he remained there for thirty nine years! He felt very comfortable in that Christian environment with such lovely people.



A bonus of working there was that it enabled Robert to meet his wife Janet. Having moved to 'finance', he was responsible for the paying-in at HSBC in Tunbridge Wells High Street. Janet, a relief cashier at the time, happened to be behind the counter and romance blossomed over the cheques and coins! Janet had grown up in Otford (her mother was school secretary) so, in 1985, the Hunts married in St Bartholomew's. It was the first wedding that Revd David Towne had conducted as incumbent. Married life began in Tunbridge Wells but, when Janet's mother died in 1991, they moved into her house where they have lived ever since. Their daughter, Naomi (a teacher) was born in 1994.

Janet described Robert as, 'a doer behind the scenes' and it is clear that, in a quiet unassuming way, Robert does much for church and community. He has been the Church Hall manager and booking secretary for twelve years, he sometimes leads prayers, he 'litter picks' around the village, he clears tables at the village lunch club and he makes a weekly visit to Gloucester House care home to chat with the elderly residents.

Robert is an avid reader of newspapers and takes a great interest in politics and current affairs. A familiar figure in the congregation, he regularly attends the Sunday 10am service.

Christeen Malan



ANCIENT WISDOM - MODERN LIVES

Here comes Jesus, on Palm Sunday!

(Based on Luke 19:28-38)

A little donkey lived at Olive Tree Farm. He often stood, tied to a shady tree, dreaming of the day when he would be big enough to give someone a ride on his back. Who would that be, he wondered. And where would he take them?

One day, he heard voices in the yard. Two men were coming through the gate into his paddock. They wore stripy cloaks and smiled broadly.

"Hello, little donkey!" they said. "We're going to untie you. Jesus our Master needs you!"

Back went the donkey's ears. What was happening? He didn't belong to these men. So he opened his mouth, and gave a very loud HEE-HAW!

"Hey! Where are you taking my donkey?" called the farmer.

"Jesus, our Master, needs him," explained the men. "But we'll bring him back soon!"

The farmer nodded. "Go on, little donkey! You'll be quite safe with Jesus!"

As he trotted along between the two men, his hooves clattered on the road. *Clip-clop, clip-clop!* He put his ears forward again. This was quite an adventure!

Soon they met a group of people talking and laughing at the roadside. The little donkey stopped, afraid to go forward. But a man with a kind face stepped out of the crowd and came to whisper in his ears.

"Don't be afraid, little donkey. I'm your friend, Jesus. Will you help me? I want you to carry me all the way to Jerusalem."

The little donkey wasn't sure. He hadn't given anyone a ride before! But he stood quietly to let Jesus climb onto his back. Then they all set off along the road. *Clip clop, clip clop!*

Many people stood at the roadside, looking out for them.

"Look who's coming!" they shouted. "It's Jesus, our gentle king, riding on a little donkey!" The little donkey twitched his ears. Was he really carrying a king on his back?

"Hello, Jesus!" called a boy. "Thank you for making my sister better!"

"Please bless our family!" asked a mum with her baby.

As they started to go down the steep hillside, Jesus' friends began to sing for joy and people waved spiky palm leaves to welcome their king!

Now the road climbed up, up into the city of Jerusalem. But somehow the little donkey didn't feel tired. He walked under a big archway and out into the warm sunshine. Someone laid a cloak on the road. How soft it felt under his hooves!

"Here comes Jesus!" shouted crowds of people. "Hosanna! Welcome to our gentle king!" What a din! But the little donkey didn't feel scared any more - just pleased and proud to be bringing King Jesus.

Vicki Howie



DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS

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



At a recent conference that I attended Stephen Dorrell, who is currently Chairman of the NHS Confederation, was explaining how housing is the single most important intervention to make a difference to

people's health. He was backed up by Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive of Public Health England, who said that the NHS contributes between 10 and 20 percent towards our good health; another 30 percent of our health is impacted by the choices we make: whether we smoke, how much we drink, what we eat and how much we exercise; while the rest of our health is decided by the environment in which we live.

It was great to hear that the District is on the right track with our housing strategy: 'Wellbeing Starts at Home,' and the work we are doing to put the promotion of wellbeing at the heart of all we do. So from now on Planning, Housing, Licensing, Environmental Health, Economic Development, Community Safety and Leisure will no longer work in silos but together to create a district conducive to wellbeing.

I have written a lot about our rapid hospital discharge scheme that helps people to be discharged from hospital as soon as they are clinically ready. This is essential given that older people lose up to 5 percent of their muscle mass each day they stay in hospital – so it is important that they return to independent living as soon as possible.

We have gone one step further than our rapid hospital discharge scheme and now, working

with Kent County Council, we employ four *One You* advisors that work in GP surgeries and other settings tackling the non-medical causes of why people visit the GP – even when the symptoms are medical. Examples include: anxiety caused by debt, asthma caused by damp housing, stress caused by over-crowding; a whole range of issues caused by loneliness and isolation, and health issues caused by bad diet and/or lack of exercise.

Our *One You* advisors talk to people to get to the bottom of their problems and then signpost them to where they can find support to help solve their problems. They are also working with GPs to identify people most likely to fall so that we can arrange home adaptations to prevent them from falling and being admitted to hospital in the first place. The service is very much around prevention being better than cure. If you would like to see one of our *One You* advisors you can visit our website: https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20078/health/368/one_you call: 0300 0200636 or email: healthy.living@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Stephen Dorrell was explaining at the recent conference that I attended that, in New York, the city was able to improve their residents' health and substantially reduce doctors' appointments by installing air conditioning units in the Bronx. This again highlights the links between good housing and good health. In the UK, we probably would not need air conditioning units but good heating and fuel efficiency would achieve a similar aim.

With best wishes,

Michelle

THROUGH THE EYES OF AN ARTIST

The Three Crosses by Rembrandt

Working as an artist is mostly a solitary experience. To counteract a sense of isolation, being part of a like-minded group from time to time is important and reaps huge rewards. I'm attending the Royal Drawing School once a week. Last term the course was held in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

One of the highlights was having the opportunity to spend time in the Prints and Drawings room, on the sixth floor. Our tutor had pre-arranged for a selection of etchings and drawings to be displayed on table top easels. Careful not to take in anything other than pencils and erasers, we were invited to choose and sit in front of an unframed picture or original print with our sketchbooks.

What emerged on paper by the end of the afternoon was my interpretation of Rembrandt's dry point/etching, The Three Crosses.

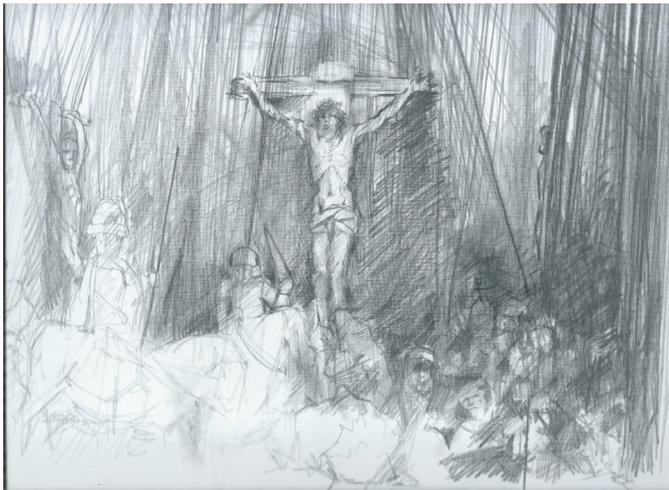
This drawing took me three hours. People always ask 'How long did it take you to do that?' but I wasn't really aware of how much time was passing. It had felt like a meditation, an Easter vigil perhaps (in late November, on a dark afternoon).

I recalled a line from RS Thomas' poem "Good Friday" that speaks of the construction of the cross. "The carpenter had done his work well to sustain the carpenter's burden." In those few hours of concentrated drawing I found myself thinking about Jesus the craftsman who had, so appallingly, been killed by the very tools of his trade.

First made in 1653, Rembrandt reworked the composition over the next ten years. Typing 'Rembrandt the three crosses' as an internet (image) search will show the etching in its variations right through to its final darkest impression.

Ann Bridges

*Pencil interpretation by Ann Bridges
Local artist and designer
www.ann-bridges.com*



RE-ORDERING AND REDECORATION UPDATE



Many other aspects of the project have also been worked on, and the church has been a hive of activity. Plumbers have laid the pipework for the new heating system; the audio-visual firm has laid the cables for the projection and sound system; plasterers have patched up blemishes in the walls; scaffolding has been put in place for the east and west windows and walls; stone cleaning specialists have been working on the central arcade and columns, the pulpit, font and windows; carpenters have been adapting some pews and pew frontals; and painters have been decorating the walls.

We are very thankful for the skilful and efficient work of Bakers of Danbury and for James Ford our architect and Heather Stanley our project manager. We look forward to reporting on more progress next month!

The re-ordering and redecoration work is progressing well. The photo above shows Dave, Charlie and John standing where the pew platform had recently been removed. Underneath there was just bare earth, and fortunately at that depth there were no detectable archaeological remains. In addition, the old heating system had been removed and the photo also shows the outline of where the old chancel step had been.

The photo to the right shows the Dave and John putting the finishing touches to the base of the new nave platform. This consists of over 24 tons of limecrete which they made up and carried into the church wheelbarrow by wheelbarrow over the previous month. Where they are kneeling will be covered by red and black tiles to match the aisles and the platform will have a stone finish. The pipework for one of the new radiators can also be seen sticking up from the floor.



OUT AND ABOUT



THE KEMSING SINGERS are giving a concert in aid of The Hospice in the Weald on Saturday 17th March at 7.30pm in The Otford Methodist Church, High Street, Otford. This will be a concert of light classical and show music to celebrate the life of Sue Choudhury, a much-missed alto in the choir and staunch church member who died in 2017. The music will include favourites by John Rutter, The Rhythm of Life, a selection from Oliver and a medley of Simon and Garfunkel hits. This will be followed by a chance to mingle and enjoy good refreshments. Tickets £8 from 01959 523752 or from any member of the Kemsing Singers. Additional donations to refreshments and the charity will be welcome.



OTFORD-NEUFCHATEL-HARDELOT TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Our next Social Gathering at the Woodman in Otford will be on Monday 5th March from 7.30pm. Past, present and new members do join us. Everyone is most welcome.



VILLAGE FETE

This year's village fete will be on Monday, 28th May 2018. Fete open 11 am - 4 pm, £1.50 entry (11 and under free)

Car park, subject to space, £2 plus entry fee
There is a logo competition for this year's fete - go to the fete website to find out more
www.villagefete.otford.info



Otford Evening W.I.'s next meeting is on Thursday the 8th of March at 7.30pm in the Club Room of the Memorial Hall, when our speaker will be Philip Nelkon and his subject is "Play Better Scrabble". Perhaps we will learn some new words!

Visitors are very welcome to join us - please contact 01959 524831 if you require any more information.



OTFORD GARDENERS' SOCIETY

Saturday 24th March from 2.15 - 4.15pm **The Spring Show** is the first show of the year and will feature spring bulbs and early flowers as well as flower arrangements, cookery & photography classes. Homemade teas are available until 4pm.

For details of all events please contact the Society Secretary, Janet Finney on 01959 523760, e-mail gardeners@otford.net or visit www.otford.info/gardeners. Our venue is Otford Village Memorial Hall, High Street Otford TN14 5PQ

JESUS DEAD AND BURIED? A new documentary written, and directed by Ronald Clements of West Kingsdown Baptist Church will be shown at the Baptist church on Sunday 4th March, 4-6pm. Follow the link to see the trailer www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjzef77xang

MARCH PUZZLE PAGE

Jesus at the gates of Jerusalem

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday, when the Church remembers how Jesus arrived at the gates of Jerusalem just a few days before the Passover was due to be held. He was the Messiah come to His own people in their capital city, and yet He came in humility, riding on a young

donkey, not in triumph, riding on a war-horse. As Jesus entered the city, the crowds gave Him a rapturous welcome, throwing palm fronds into His path. They knew His reputation as a healer, and welcomed Him. But sadly, the welcome was short-lived and shallow, for Jerusalem would soon reject her Messiah, and put Him to death.



holy
palm
arrived
gates
Jerusalem
Passover
Held
Messiah

Own
People
City
Came
Humility
Riding
Young
Donkey

Triumph
Crowds
Rapturous
Fronds
Healer
Welcomed
Reject
death

CURRIED PARSNIP SOUP WITH SODA BREAD

At the time this was submitted we have had some particularly foul weather, and soup and bread make a comforting lunch. My favourite soup is curried parsnip, and I also made some soda bread which can be prepared in moments and ready half an hour later.

Curried Parsnip Soup

2 oz butter
1 ½ oz flour
2 large parsnips (chopped)
1-1 ½ teaspoons of curry powder
1 chopped onion
2 pints beef or chicken stock
1 crushed clove of garlic
¼ pint cream
Salt and pepper

Cook the parsnips, onion and garlic very gently in the butter until softened but not browned. Add the flour and curry powder (quantity according to preferred level of spice) to thicken, and slowly add the stock while mixing with a whisk. Simmer for about 15 minutes or until the parsnip is cooked. Liquidise or blend, return to the pan and add seasoning to taste. Stir in cream. It can be decorated when served with some extra cream.

Soda Bread

6 oz self-raising wholemeal flour
½ tsp salt
6 oz plain flour
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
½ pint buttermilk.

Preheat the oven to 200°. Mix all the ingredients except the buttermilk and make a well in the centre. Add the buttermilk and mix quickly to make a soft dough (you can add a little milk if it is too dry). Turn on a floured surface, roll into a round and put on a floured baking sheet. Cut a cross on the top, and bake for about 30 minutes. It will sound hollow when tapped when it is ready. Cool on a wire rack.

Hilary Fothergill



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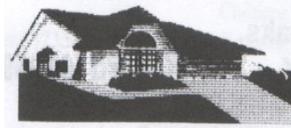
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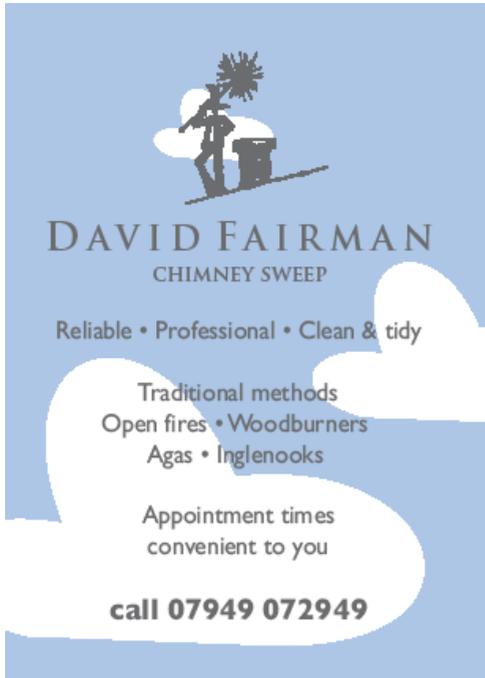
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The advertisement features a black and white photograph of a woman performing a Pilates exercise on a reformer machine in a studio. The text is overlaid on the image, with the logo at the top and contact information at the bottom.




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Ex-Officio (Diocesan Synod) * Ex-Officio (Deanery Synod)