

St Bartholomew's Church



Oxford Parish News

July/August 2018

www.stbartholomews.co.uk

£1

SERVICES AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

July/August	8am	10am	3pm	6.30pm
1 July - 5 August	Holy Communion	Sunday Club Celebration Service - All Together Worship	-	Evensong
8 July - 12 August	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	-	-
15 July - 19 August	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	-	Evensong
22 July - 26 August	Holy Communion (BCP)	Holy Communion	-	-
29 July	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	-	-

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 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)

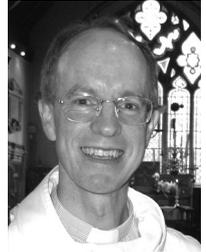
If you would like to book a baptism or wedding, please contact the Church Office 01959 523185.

Vicar's off duty day: Monday

Cover photo by Richard Worssam: Terry Waite being interviewed by Nick Page
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VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

Much of this month will be dominated by the football World Cup. Love it or loathe it, the World Cup is a major international event. It is particularly poignant that this year the event is being held in Russia. At a time when relations between Russia and the West are so strained, it is good to have a focus which transcends this tension.



In his own day, St. Paul used sporting analogies to convey truths about the Christian faith. On his missionary journeys he spent a significant amount of time living in Corinth and he would have been familiar with the famous Isthmian games of ancient Greece. He wrote that just as athletes need to train hard and to keep their eyes focused on the finishing line, so also Christians need to persevere in their faith and keep their attention focused on the hope of heaven that awaits us.

In a similar vein, I suspect Paul would have been open to using analogies drawn from football if he were writing in the present. There are certainly a number of parallels. One of the most significant is that whilst football and faith both involve individual practice, they are essentially team experiences. Footballers need to hone their skills with the ball, and Christians need to grow in the practice of prayer and Bible reading, but in both cases this is only part of the story.

Simply to kick a ball around by ourselves in the park or our back garden falls far short of what football is all about; likewise, imagining we can be a Christian without reference to the church family leads to a severely impoverished experience of faith. To know the full joy of the game of football we need to be part of a team; and to know more truly what it means to be a Christian

we need to take part in the life of the church.

This analogy can be developed further. Every member in a football squad is important. Each player needs to be committed to turning up for training sessions. Likewise, the life of a church depends on the commitment of its members.

Also, a team needs players of different skills and abilities. Strikers are important for scoring goals, but they need to be supported by midfielders. Goalkeepers are vital, but they need to be backed up by the hard work of defenders. So also a church depends on members with varying gifts. Some are good at public speaking and teaching, and this is important for communicating and explaining our faith. But a thriving church also needs those who are gifted in pastoral care or with skills in administration.

Ultimately a football team exists to play matches. Without this players would lose interest. So also, the church exists not just for its own sake, but to play its part in furthering the Kingdom of God, proclaiming the Good News of Jesus and bringing blessing to both individuals and the wider community as we share God's love with those around us.

Your friend and Vicar, *Richard*

DIARY FOR JULY AND AUGUST 2018

Morning Prayer is said on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays each week in Church at 9.00 am

1 The Fifth Sunday after Trinity

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Sunday Club Celebration Service

12.30 pm BBQ in The Vicarage garden

6.30 pm Evensong

2 7.45 pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)

8.00 pm Fair Committee ('Burway', Sevenoaks Road)

3 8.00 pm Homegroup (Park Farm House); Mission Links team (52, High Street)

4 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) refreshments afterwards

11.00 am 'First Steps' Summer Praise and Teddy Bears' picnic (St. Bartholomew's)

6-8 Church Youth Weekend at Kench Hill

7 9.00 am Churchyard Working Party

8 The Sixth Sunday after Trinity

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Holy Communion

9 7.45 pm CAMEO (17 Leonard Avenue)

11 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

8.00 pm Fabric Committee (Church Centre)

12 7.15 pm Men's Walk from the Church car park

14 6.00 pm EPIC (Church Centre)

15 The Seventh Sunday after Trinity

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Morning Worship and the baptism of Yasmine Jones

3-4.00 pm Otford Junior Choir (Church Centre)

6.30 pm Evensong

16 12-2.00 pm Soup Lunch (Church Centre)

7.45 pm Summer Social (17 Leonard Avenue)

17 8.00 pm Homegroup (Park Farm House)

18 9.30 am 'First Steps' (Otford Methodist Church Hall)

10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) (Rev. Chris Reed) refreshments afterwards

7.45 pm Finance & Standing Committee (Church Centre)

19 8.00 pm Readers and Revs (17 Leonard Avenue)

21 10.30 am Memorial service for the Peter Bratby

6.30 pm Pop-up Italian Restaurant (Church Centre)

22 The Eighth Sunday after Trinity

8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

4 **10.00 am Holy Communion**

23 7.45 pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)

25 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

29 The Ninth Sunday after Trinity

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Morning Worship and baptism of George and Toby Bates

12 noon Baptism of Lily May Barber

30 7.45 pm CAMEO (17 Leonard Avenue)

AUGUST

1 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) (Rev. Chris Reed) refreshments afterwards

4 9.00 am Churchyard Working Party

5 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 (Rev. Chris Reed)

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

12 The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

8.00 am Holy Communion (Rev. Chris Reed)

10.00 am Holy Communion (Rev. Chris Reed)

13 7.45 pm CAMEO (17 Leonard Avenue)

15 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) (Rev. Adie McCall) refreshments afterwards

19 The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

8.00 am Holy Communion (Rev. Adie McCall)

10.00 am Morning Worship

6.30 pm Evensong

20 7.45 pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)

22 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

26 The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

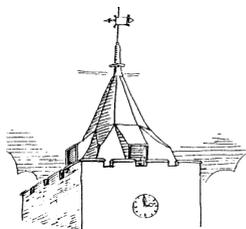
10.00 am Holy Communion

27 Bank Holiday

7.45 pm CAMEO (17 Leonard Avenue)

29 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

FROM ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH



CHURCHYARD WORKING PARTY

Saturdays, 7th July and 4th August. Anyone able to support the regular team will be most welcome from 9.00 am, together with any useful tools.

SUMMER SOUP LUNCH

The next soup lunch will be held on Monday 16th July in the Church Centre from 12-2pm.

Our coffee-time guest will be Whitehall Mandarin, musician and former Church Warden, Mark Holmes.

Do come along to enjoy the homemade soup and bread and a light dessert with friends.

Minimum donation £5. Please don't forget to sign up on the list at the back of church!

SUNDAY CLUB CELEBRATION SERVICE

This takes place on Sunday, 1st July at the 10.00 am service when the three Sunday Club groups will be contributing to different parts of the service. There will continue to be basic provision for children on all Sundays throughout the summer weeks.

PARISH SUMMER BBQ AND BRING & SHARE LUNCH

You are warmly invited to our parish summer BBQ in the Vicarage garden from 12.30 pm onwards. The burgers and sausages will be provided and the rest will be on a bring and share basis (and please bring your own drinks).

We invite those with the surnames A-K to bring a pudding and those with the surnames L-Z to bring salads and savouries. Do come and enjoy a time of fellowship and a relaxed afternoon as the summer holidays approach.

ITALIAN POP-UP RESTAURANT

**Saturday, 21st July, 6.30 pm Aperitifs;
7.00 pm Sit-down 3
course meal.**

A selection of Italian food to choose from.

Coffee and biscotti, bring your own drinks.

Book your individual or

group reservation through the Church Office (01959 523185 am only). Minimum suggested donation: £20 per person. Proceeds to general church funds.



ST. BART'S MEN'S GROUP:

ANNUAL SUMMER WALK - 12th JULY

The annual Men's group summer walk will be held on Thursday, 12th July, leaving at 7.15 pm from the Church car park. Douglas Howie will lead us on a walk in the local area, taking in a pub or two along the way!

THE FRIENDS OF KENT CHURCHES BIKE & HIKE

Saturday, 8th September

This will be held between 10.00 am and 6.00 pm. Potential sponsors will be most welcome. We are looking for a rota of people to welcome visiting cyclists and walkers to sign them in. If you can spare an hour or two, please contact the Church Office on 01959 523185. The money we raise is divided between Friends of Kent Churches and our parish.

OTFORD JUNIOR CHOIR

We meet in the Church Centre on Sunday, 15th July from 3-4.00 pm.

We hope to attract young people in the village to 'give it a try'. The age group is settling into the 8-11 range, with most children coming from Otford Primary School, but the word is getting around and children are coming from other parts of Sevenoaks as well.

If you know of young people who are 8 or over who might be interested in singing, boys or girls, singers or tone-deaf growlers, just call me on 01959 523401 or email cmbishop38@gmail.com
Please keep spreading the word!

Chris Bishop

CHURCH HALL OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Our Church Hall was built in 1910 and was actively used by the Church until 2007 when the new Church Centre adjoining St. Bart's was opened. Since then the Hall has hardly been used by the Church. Almost all church-related activities now take place in the Church Centre. A recent survey has shown that the fabric of the Hall needs some major work which will cost at least £30,000, and potentially much more, even before any interior refurbishment is taken into account.

The Parochial Church Council is therefore initiating an options appraisal process regarding the future of the Hall and we would like to hear your views.

The consultation will be in two phases. There will be a period of 40 days from 24th June when church members can put forward comments and suggestions. This information will be analysed by a team who will present the initial findings at an open morning on Saturday 1st September from 10 am to 12 noon in the Church Centre.

We will then be inviting members of the village community to put forward their views, and these will be collated for an open morning on Saturday 6th October. The PCC will then consider the submissions of both the Church and the village at its meeting on 17th October.

You can make your comments via the church web site, or email churchhallconsultation@StBartholomews.co.uk, or write down your comments and put them in a suggestions box in the main entrance of the Church. The goal is to find a long-term solution that brings benefit to both community and church, which is in line with the values of St. Bart's and, importantly, which is financially viable.



Registers



BAPTISM (Our Welcome)

24th June Archie Jack **Berger-Smith**

FUNERAL (Our Sympathy)

3rd May Christine **Masson** (aged 84)

14th May Charlotte **Parson** (aged 30)

7th June Audrey **Thomas** (aged 83)

FAITH IN THE FAMILY...

July/August: Please bless our family!

Parents' pause for thought: Take time to read the story about Jesus blessing the little children on p.14 and in the Bible. If you have a new baby or young children, you will know how much they depend on you for their everyday needs! Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven consists of people who are willing to become like children, full of trust, loving and humble.

The end of the summer term may bring change into our lives as our children move up from one class to another or even leave one school to go up to the next or on to College. So it is wonderful to know that we can place our trust in God to guide and care for us.

Think about the ways that your family is a blessing to you. (Not many people at the end of their lives wish that they had spent more time in the office!) If you were a parent in the Bible story, in what ways would you ask Jesus to bless each of your children? Think how we can all be blessed by God in challenging times as well as in the good times.

Jesus blesses the little children: Read the story on p.14 together as a family. Wonder together about it, as follows:

I wonder what you think Jesus looked like?

How important do you think children are to Jesus?

What do you think it means to be blessed by God?

How can we be a blessing to each other?

Make a Blessings Jar:

Create a blessings jar for the summer holidays to be reminded of all the ways that God blesses your family during this time.

Use a big glass jar with a lid and tape on a label reading 'Blessings', perhaps decorated in felt tips or with stickers. Leave coloured paper and pens alongside it. Each time a family member discerns a blessing, they write it on a piece of paper, fold it up and put it in the jar.

At the end of the holidays, empty out the jar together and read through them all. Chat about God's care and guidance at different times (good and challenging).

A blessing in disguise: If this phrase crops up, chat about its meaning. Share with your children any stories from your own experience about good coming from a seemingly disappointing event, to encourage them. Talk about the fact that we don't always understand why things happen but that God can see the bigger picture and wants the best for us.



Prayer: You might like to try downloading and playing "The Lord bless you and keep you" by John Rutter at bedtime. The words are from Numbers 6:24-26. As you listen, ask God to bless the different people who come into your mind. Parents might ask God to bless their children with a deep connection to him throughout their lives.



Vicki Howie

ANCIENT WISDOM - MODERN LIVES

Jesus blesses the little children

(Based on Mark 10:13-16)

Rachel *really* wanted a story but her Mum was busy with the new baby.

“Please can I have a story?” she asked.

Mum nodded. “In a minute. Just let me dress the baby.”

“Is it time for my story *now*?” asked Rachel.

“Nearly!” said Mum. “I just need to give the baby his milk.”

Rachel sighed. “Babies take up a lot of time, don’t they?”

“That’s because they can’t do anything for themselves,” said Mum. “I think we’d better go for a walk to get him to sleep.”

“Oh no!” said Rachel. “I’ll *never* get my story now!”

On the walk, Rachel met her friends with their Mums and baby brothers and sisters.

“Hello! We’re going to see Jesus!” they said. “He’s sitting in the market place and he’s telling some wonderful stories!”

Rachel jumped up and down. “Can we go and see Jesus too?” she asked.

* * *

A big crowd was gathered under a shady tree.

“Look, Rachel, can you see Jesus?” asked Mum. “He’s sitting right there in the middle of all the people.”

Rachel looked and looked. At last she saw a man who was smiling and moving his hands about as he told a story.

“Let’s go and speak to him,” said Rachel.

“Yes,” said Mum. “We’ll ask Jesus to bless you and all the children.”

“Bless us?” said Rachel. “Whatever does ‘bless’ mean?”

“Um - it means we want Jesus to bring you lots of happiness,” she explained.

As they moved forward, a man came and spoke to Mum.

“Don’t interrupt Jesus now!” he said crossly. “Can’t you see he’s busy teaching the crowd?”

Poor Mum looked upset and some of the babies started to cry. Then something AMAZING happened. Jesus stood up, held out his arms to them and called, “I’m never too busy for children! Let the little children come to me!”

Jesus took the babies in his arms.

“May God bless you!” he said, and the little ones opened their eyes and gazed up at him.

Then he knelt down beside Rachel.

“And what can I do for *you*, Rachel?” he asked, smiling.

Rachel looked at Mum and then back at Jesus.

“Would you tell me a story?” she asked shyly.

“A story!” said Jesus. “Yes, of course. I’m very good at those!”

Then he told Rachel her favourite story all about how God made the world and all the animals and all the people. Rachel felt very important sitting there with Jesus, listening to her own special story. And all the grown ups enjoyed it too! *Which Bible story would you ask Jesus to tell you?*

Vicki Howie

CYCLING THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

Livvy Howie learns a few life lessons along the most popular Christian pilgrimage route in the world

“What brought you to the Camino?” asked Diego, an 18-year old American, on the first day of my journey to Santiago de Compostela. Was it a spiritual calling? A fitness challenge? Or simply an escape from the busy-ness of modern life and the constant ‘ding’ of iPhone notifications?

I’d read about the Camino de Santiago (The Way of Saint James) when my choir – The Cantus Ensemble – performed Joby Talbot’s Path of Miracles, a piece inspired by the Pilgrimage. Last year, over 300,000 Pilgrims received their Compostela, a certificate for reaching Santiago after walking 100km or cycling 200km along one of the recognised routes.

I opted to cycle The French Way, which covers 790km from South West France to North West Spain. I began my journey in León with 320km to go. I felt apprehensive about the logistics of the trip, particularly as I was traveling alone; would I get a bed at the hostels (walkers get priority)? What if I got lost? Most worryingly...could I fix a puncture?!



My adventure began as the setting sun cast its final rays on León cathedral. My rented bike had already arrived, in a box, in the backyard of my hostel. This presented my first challenge: to assemble it before the light faded. With the right tools, I was able to screw on the pedals, swivel the handlebars and adjust the seat to my height.

The first three days of my journey were accompanied by glorious sunshine. Once out of the city, the route was easy to follow - yellow arrows and scallop shells (the most iconic symbol of the Camino) to guide you and many walkers on the route. The challenge of the up-hills (slowed by luggage) was rewarded by stunning views; one morning I was cycling above the clouds! I felt someone was looking out for me and I didn’t feel alone.

Every time I reached an ‘albergue’ – a Pilgrim’s hostel – I was greeted by amazing warmth and hospitality. Costing €5-10 each, the albergues provide a bed in a dormitory, a shower and sometimes clothes washing facilities. After 6-8 hours cycling a day, I began to appreciate even the simplest of rest places!

I was even more delighted to discover the ‘menu Peregrino’ (Pilgrim’s dinner). An average €10 buys a three course meal with wine! These replenished my energy and introduced me to Pilgrims from around the world. One lady was inspired to walk the Camino by her son who had cerebral palsy and had walked it in 81 days. This was the first thing she had done on her own since the death of her husband and I could see the strength and confidence it had given her. ‘The Camino keeps on giving’ – something I would hear often along the way...

Day 5 presented a real test as the heavens opened. Freezing, I found shelter in a bar for lunch (and a hot whisky!). But as soon as I set off again, it happened- a puncture! I took a deep breath, pulled out my phone and typed 'How to Fix a Puncture' into YouTube. I just had to follow the steps one at a time. Success! That day I kept on cycling, as if to convince myself of good workmanship... and arrived in Santiago two days ahead of schedule!



In the Pilgrim's office, the elderly man who greeted me was dismayed by my freezing hands! He kindly filled in my arrival form for me and directed me to some good hostels.

None had room! But a kind receptionist called around and found a vacancy in a scruffy hostel. Another lesson learnt – don't judge on appearances – the shower was powerful and hot, the heater dried my clothes and I slept for over 10 hours!

With two days left of bike hire, I continued west along the path to Finisterre – once believed by Pilgrims to be the end of the world. Praying for clear skies, the clouds parted and as the beautiful peninsular marking the official end of my journey came into view, I couldn't help but shed a few tears. A Portuguese man called Marco offered to take my picture and said 'Life is like a pilgrimage... you face challenges, they made you stronger, and you carry on!'

I returned to Santiago the next day to attend the huge Pilgrims Mass and reflect on my journey. The sheer number of people bursting out of the cathedral reassured me of the strength of our worldwide Christian community. Each would have gained something from their journey; I had been reminded to appreciate the simple things in life, the beauty of God's natural world and to see every challenge as something to strengthen me in the future. And of course... I can now fix a puncture!

Livvy Howie



IN CONVERSATION WITH ... NAJEN HARRIS

First Steps co-ordinator and a Sunday Club leader

Najen was born in Minster Hospital on the Isle of Sheppey and grew up in Sittingbourne - as did her husband Mervyn. In those days nearly everyone in the town knew each other through the two large Bowater paper mills. Najen's father, uncle and grandfather were all employed there and Mervyn's father worked there too. Najen comes from a close family and has one sister who is five years younger than her. Both her parents and Mervyn's parents still live in Sittingbourne and large family get-togethers are a regular occurrence.

As a child Najen was extremely fond of animals (as is her daughter, Amy). When she started secondary school Najen volunteered to look after the school guinea pig in the holidays. Whilst her own pet guinea pig was male, the school one was female meaning that the school was never short of baby guinea pigs. All was above board however as, during the holidays, Najen would enjoy conducting marriage ceremonies for the animals involving veils and bouquets!

After attending the Convent of the Nativity in Sittingbourne, then St Peter's School, Najen went to Fulston Manor Comprehensive, just across the road from her home. The pupils there were assessed by the teachers for two years before a decision was made as to whether or not they should move to a grammar school. At 13, Najen was selected to attend Highstead Grammar where she made a number of lifelong friends. Her favourite subjects were Food and Nutrition, and Textiles, and she told me that, as very little careers advice was available, she

decided to go to secretarial college in Canterbury, seeing this as a route into employment.

Thereafter, commuting from Sittingbourne, she began working in London for Priest Marians, a property holding company based in Fanum House, Leicester Square. She began as a secretary but, by the time Priest Marians moved to Mount Street in Mayfair, she had become involved in project management. When Priest Marians went into liquidation she worked with the company secretary and receivers before joining the chartered surveyors' firm looking after the estates – DTZ, based in Swallow Place near Bond Street. There she eventually became an associate director, with responsibility for a team of property administrators as well as for the computer system, before resigning to have children. She spoke enthusiastically about the 'lovely places' she worked in London and has happy memories of lunches eaten in Hyde Park and of easy access to the shops which was 'very handy at Christmas time'.

Najen never felt completely fulfilled at work; greater fulfilment has come from marriage and family life. She and Mervyn began to get acquainted when they were both still at school and had Saturday jobs at Sainsburys. Whilst Najen was on the checkouts, Mervyn was shifting the trolleys and sweeping the floors. In the earlier days of their relationship, when they were both still working, they loved to travel to interesting and exotic locations such as Bali, India, Kenya, Hong Kong, America and Canada. After they were married in St Bart's by the Revd Pat Hopkins in 1999, they honeymooned in Australia where they particularly enjoyed Heron Island on the Great Barrier Reef – a small, traffic free sanctuary where they could reef walk and snorkel.

From Sittingbourne, Najen and Mervyn had moved to rented accommodation in Bearsted before saving up enough to buy a home in Otford. Najen spoke enthusiastically about the village saying that, on first coming to look round, 'we both fell in love with it and have never wanted to live anywhere else'. In June 2003 the Harris' two children, Amy and Alec were born. Looking after twins was a demanding role and Najen said that 'come rain or shine' she used to walk with the double buggy through the village every day. She also attended First Steps admitting it had been a 'lifeline' in providing contact with other mothers in a friendly group setting. Recognising how significant First Steps was to her, Najen then stayed on as an organiser. She also helps with Sunday Club and has demonstrated impressive creative talent in designing and coordinating the 'all in' Sunday Club murals and displays.

Najen attended church as a child with her father and both she and Mervyn felt warmly welcomed by Pat Hopkins when they moved to Otford. Having conducted their marriage

service in 1999, Pat also later baptised Alec and Amy. Najen describes herself as 'a Christian first and an Anglican second' saying she likes the links St Bart's has with the other churches and enjoys working alongside the Methodists at First Steps. Her faith has been a source of support and comfort to her when coping with issues of family and health. Najen often talks about faith (and other matters) when out walking with her friend, Linda Green, Rector of St Martin's, Brasted.

Najen relishes family life. She is grateful that Amy and Alec still have all four grandparents alive and that the wider family get on so well together and meet so frequently. She also spoke with enthusiasm about their family cycling, swimming and walking holidays, mainly taken in this country and Europe, usually with Mervyn's parents too. This year however, to mark Mervyn and Najen's fiftieth birthdays, the four Otford Harris' will be travelling alone to Yellowstone Park, USA for a unique and exciting adventure.

Christeen Malan



Najen with her family at her sister's wedding



Najen with her Mum and daughter, Amy .

THROUGH THE EYES OF AN ARTIST

A pencil sketch of Marble Carvings at the V & A Museum

On yet another visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum (with my sketchbook in my bag), I came across a collection of marble carvings. A seat was conveniently positioned opposite them so I sat down to do a swift sketch with the sun shining through a high window creating strong shadows.

They were made sometime around 1250-1270, originally from Chertsey Abbey.

There was nothing to identify either the sculptor or the subjects, no way of knowing if the figures were based on real people or imagined. I wasn't sure if these two were asleep or lost in contemplation!

I like a lot of different expressions of Art, but I particularly admire the work of craftspeople, makers of objects, especially when something is both functional *and* beautiful. When this

combination is found in a place of worship it brings to mind the lovely hymn 'Angel Voices Ever Singing' (Francis Pott 1832-1909) and the lines 'Craftsman's art and music's measure, for thy pleasure, all combine'.

Before leaving the V&A I went to the jewellery gallery, where a short film shows my father at work making a silver watch case. The whole museum is a celebration of 'makers' throughout history.

We have no idea if what we make, compose or write will stand the test of time (or indeed whether it deserves to do so), but there is a satisfaction in creating something with our hands, and sharing it.

Ann Bridges

Local artist and designer

www.ann-bridges.com



DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS

www.sevenoaks.gov.uk Clr.Lowe@sevenoaks.gov.uk <http://michellelowe.yourcldr.com>

Rural Housing Week takes place from the 2nd to the 6th of July to highlight rural housing issues and to celebrate and showcase innovative solutions. It shows how successful developments from specialist older peoples' accommodation, to starter homes and affordable family housing, can offer a lifeline to local people in market towns and rural villages.

The main aim of rural housing week is to demonstrate the positive value of housebuilding in rural areas and how building affordable housing is helping rural communities to survive and thrive. The week will also focus on how councils and housing associations are tackling isolation and loneliness in rural areas – which can be more severe than in urban towns. The week also provides an opportunity to explore rural housing as a backdrop for innovation.

Sevenoaks District Council will be supporting rural housing week on Friday 6th July in Leigh village in the south of the district. It is home to some beautiful alms houses near the Fleur de Lis pub in the centre of the village. Sevenoaks District Council makes a point of celebrating and supporting alms houses as they are an ancient form of rural affordable housing, and are often beautiful listed buildings.

We will also be highlighting Gibbs Field. It was completed in 2007 as a partnership between West Kent Housing Association and English Rural Housing Association. It is a rural exception site of affordable housing specifically for people with a local connection to Leigh. The scheme is a mixture of seven social rented units and three shared-ownership ones. Rural exception sites involve building on a small amount of greenbelt land to provide for a very

local housing need with the support of the parish council and local community. Gibbs Field site has been very successful.

Leigh conducted a second rural housing survey of their village last year and discovered that 28 adults and 11 children have a need for affordable housing. This is not surprising as, in Leigh, the cheapest property on sale in the parish was a two-bedroom home valued at £325,000 which would require a deposit of £48,750 and a required income of £78,929. In order to rent, an income of approximately £36,000 would be required to rent the cheapest available property: a two-bedroom house for £900 per calendar month.

Leigh provides an example of the need for rural affordable housing which is common across our district and is of note because they have ancient alms houses, a successful existing rural exception site and the village is interested in a second rural exception site to house local people such as teaching assistants and care workers.

Although this is all taking place in Leigh it highlights many of the housing issues faced by rural communities, such as Otford, across the district and some of the innovations that are being put in place to solve them.

With best wishes,

Michelle Lowe





IN MEMORIAM



CHRISTINE MASSON, 1934-2018

Chris was born on 25th January 1934 in Woolwich and, together with her older brother and younger sister, she spent her early years growing up in Shooters Hill. Chris was only 5 when the Second World War broke out. Her father was serving as a civil clerk in the army, and the whole family was evacuated to Bideford in Devon.

On returning to London the family settled in Greenwich, and Chris attended the Roan School for Girls. She had a great love of early films and musicals and was very knowledgeable about them. She would have liked to have had the chance to go on and study film or drama. But instead she went to Regent Street Polytechnic to qualify as a shorthand typist. This would hold her in good stead, but it meant that her dream of studying music or art never became a reality.

In 1957 a new chapter began for Chris when she married her husband, John, in Woolwich. John had also grown up in Shooters Hill, and he and Chris met through the Young Conservatives group which ran various social events such as dances. They were courting for a couple of years before they got married. For their first home they lived in Westcliffe-on-Sea in Essex, before moving to Sale in Cheshire with John's job. He was working for Shell at the time as a Chemical Engineer.

They soon began a family, with Julia being born in 1960 and Antonia in 1963. In 1965 the family moved south, and settled in Otford. John had taken a new job with the engineering firm Humphries and Glasgow based in London, and Otford was an ideal commuting distance. At first the family lived in Willow Park, from 1965 to 1970, and then they moved to Tudor Drive.

Chris worked for various local businesses, including as a legal secretary for the solicitors firm Vallis and Struthers and later for Reed International, the publisher of legal books based at Borough Green.

Right from the outset, Chris threw herself into village life. She soon found various outlets for her talents in music and art. Chris was actively involved with the Otford Players, not only taking acting roles but also directing plays. Chris was also a keen member of the WI. She held the position of President for a while. Another interest that Chris pursued was art, both oil and water colour. She was a member of the village art group, and she had her paintings on display in several exhibitions. Chris also helped with the Thursday lunch club. For many years she was one of the cooks, and latterly she was one of the participants.

Chris has brought music, art and a great sense of humour into people's lives, and her legacy will live on in the hearts and minds of her family and friends.



AUDREY THOMAS, 1935-2018

Audrey was born in Folkestone on 13th May 1935. She was only four when the Second World War broke out and the whole family was evacuated to a farm in Devon. The family returned to Folkestone in 1945 and here Audrey attended Lady Margaret's School. On leaving school, Audrey trained as a nurse at Kings College Hospital and qualified as an SRN.

Audrey and her husband David first started courting in 1956. They had known each other since childhood, but the romance was kindled when Audrey was working as a nurse in Richmond. They got married three years later, in 1959, in the parish church of Aldington, near Ashford in Kent. At first they rented accommodation at Sunny Bank on the Shoreham Road in Otford. Audrey continued to work as a nurse and took a job at Sevenoaks Hospital.

In 1962 Audrey and David started a family with the birth of Chris. Anne was born the following year, in 1963, and the family decided it was time to find a house of their own. So, in 1964, they moved into Maycroft, just a few doors down on the Shoreham Road, and this remained the family home for the next 5 decades. In 1965 Sue was born and the family was complete.

When the children were a little older, Audrey went back into nursing, this time working on a private basis for various family in the Sevenoaks area. In later years Audrey worked for a market research organisation, conducting surveys on a variety of commercial and social issues. For this, she was allocated certain households that she had to visit, so she travelled all around west Kent and south east London on a moped.

Audrey maintained many interests and she was actively involved in a wide range of clubs and societies. For 40 years she ran a Yoga group

that met in her lounge on Wednesday mornings. One of her main delights was Folk Dancing. Audrey was also a member of a Scrabble Club in Sevenoaks, the Otford Wine Club, the Saturday coffee morning group that meets in the Village Hall, the Thursday Lunch Club, the Women's Fellowship at the Methodist Church, the Health Walk group that meets on the Recreation Ground and also the Sevenoaks Ramblers.

As the years passed, the family grew to include five grandchildren. Audrey always took a keen interest in what they were doing. Sadly, David died in 2010. Audrey continued to live at Maycroft for a couple of years, but then in 2012 she downsized and moved to Warham Road in the centre of the village. Even in this chapter of her life she developed fresh interests. She took on an allotment, and grew a range of vegetables.

Audrey and David maintained a wide spiritual outlook. They found particular inspiration in the writings of George Gurdjieff, a philosopher and spiritual teacher of Armenian and Greek descent. Audrey came regularly to Evensong at St. Bartholomew's Church. Her memory will be cherished by her family and all her friends in both church and village.



OUT AND ABOUT



OTFORD EVENING W.I.

As gardening is on the mind of many of us at the moment we should enjoy the subject of our

July speaker, Gerald Harris, who will talk about the art and history of Monet's Garden.

Our meeting is on Thursday 14th of July at 7.30pm in the Club Room and visitors are very welcome to join us. Please contact 01959 524831 if more information is needed.



OTFORD GARDENERS' SOCIETY

Saturday 1st September.

After a summer of hard work, the **Autumn Flower and Craft Show** will

provide a marvellous display of late summer flowers and the harvest from the vegetable garden. We will also have floral arrangements, preserves and cookery and photographic classes. We also have art and handicraft classes. The show takes place in the OVMH and opens to the public at 2.15. Teas are available until 4pm and there is a sales table.



"Wait a moment, dear, this isn't a tourists'-
attraction ratings guide, it's a Health
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PUZZLE PAGE

July brings us Sea Sunday, the day when Christian churches remember, pray and give thanks for the more than 1.5 million merchant seafarers worldwide. If seafarers seem irrelevant to your daily life, think again: 90 per cent of everything you buy in the shops comes to you by sea. Merchant seafarers quite literally keep our global economy afloat. Yet it is a tough life, far from loved ones. Merchant ships are harsh working environments, never mind the threat of piracy or even shipwreck.

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July
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GARDENING THROUGH THE YEAR WITH MEMBERS OF OTFORD GARDENERS' SOCIETY

I didn't live in a house with a garden until I was nearly ten years old. My parents bought a brand new, semi-detached house on a brand new estate and it would be a couple of summers until the garden would take shape. My parents loved their new garden and we all benefited from our new found outdoor space, but I wasn't particularly interested in gardening. When I left school, I found myself working at the University of Liverpool Botanic Gardens. My love of plants started there, and has never waned.

When we started looking for a house in Otford, the garden was an instant attraction. Medium sized, with several mature trees (just right for young boys to climb), south facing and already stocked with an amazing range of plants - many of them still going strong today. Over the years, the footballs and playthings have disappeared. A greenhouse has been added and the kitchen garden extended. Our soil is quite good but heavy clay and chalk in some parts of the garden offer a challenge when choosing suitable plants.

What I love most about the gardening is finding just the right place for a plant so that it can be enjoyed to its best advantage. What will it look best next to? Will it get swamped by its neighbour? If it flourishes in winter, can I see it from the house? What do the flowers smell like? Can we eat it? These are some of the questions that run through my mind when I'm choosing plants or looking for just the right spot for that impulse buy.

July and August sometimes seem like a quiet time in the garden. The hard work that was done in the spring and early summer give way to maintenance chores; dead heading, watering and weeding. The first flush of flowers have gone

through, though the flowering period for some might be extended if the 'Chelsea Chop' has been applied. Summer bulbs and perennials such as Crocosmia, Japanese anemones, Hemerocallis



Bee feeding on Japanese Anemones

and lavender are reaching their peak and the promise of the late summer flowers of the fuchsias, sedums and asters is still to come, along with a second flush of roses. The kitchen garden is in full production and the fruit on the pear and apple start to look ready to pick. So, what is there to do in the garden? Pull out a garden chair and enjoy it, that's what!

Tips for July and August: Keep picking tomatoes and peppers to encourage more flowers. Do not cut the grass too short if the weather is dry.

*Janet Finney
Secretary of Otford Gardeners' Society*



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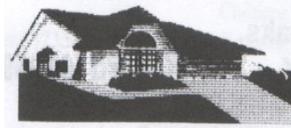
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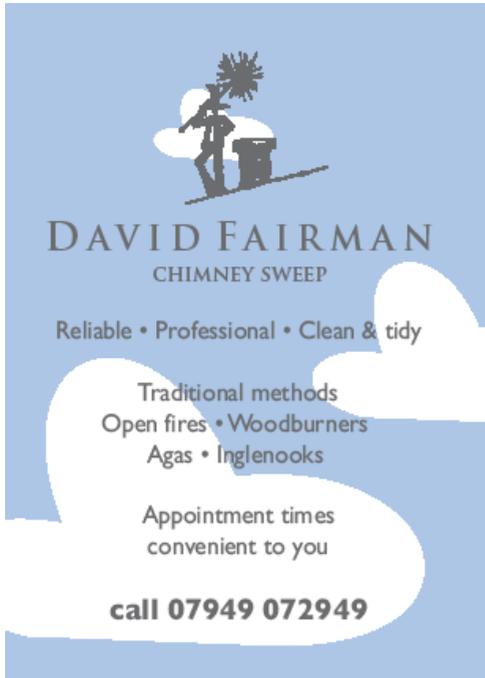
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The advertisement features a black and white photograph of a woman performing a Pilates exercise on a reformer machine. She is lying on her back with her legs raised and feet on the machine's rollers, holding a small ball with both hands above her head. Other reformer machines and people are visible in the background, suggesting a studio setting.




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