

St Bartholomew's Church

Otford Parish News



February 2019

www.stbartholomews.co.uk

£1

SERVICES AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

February	8am	10am	3pm	6.30pm
3 Feb Candlemas	Holy Communion	All Together Worship	-	Evensong
10 Feb 4th Sunday before Lent	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	-	-
17 Feb 3rd Sunday before Lent	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	-	Evensong
24 Feb 2nd Sunday before Lent	Holy Communion (BCP)	Holy Communion	-	-

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

Magazine printed by Silver Pines Services, Magazine No. 02 Volume 89

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

“Take back control” - I’m sure this is a slogan to which Henry VIII would have given his approval. He did not want to be told what he could and couldn’t do by a distant European authority figure. So, as we all know, he broke off this country’s ties with Rome and declared that the Pope should no longer have any say in the running of English national affairs. He was prompted to do this because he wanted to address his own domestic agenda, and yet he found himself caught up in a much wider international movement sweeping across the Continent. Do these dynamics sound familiar?



For the last 2 ½ years our national life has been dominated by the issue of Brexit. The last two months have seen the most extraordinary drama unfolding in Westminster as different groups struggle with each other to define what shape Brexit should take. I do not propose to rehearse here all the arguments for and against, or try to unravel the complex dilemmas that our Prime Minister, Government and MPs are grappling with. However, I would like to offer a reflection drawn from a longer perspective of Christian history.

It is based on the genesis of the Anglican Church in the crucible of the Reformation. Henry VIII’s reforms opened the flood gates to the tidal wave of the Reformation that was sweeping across Europe. Henry wanted to break the power of the Pope and to get his hands on the wealth of the monasteries, but he was wary of religious change as such. He was not a keen supporter of the Bible being widely read in English or of revisions to the liturgy. However, after his death, the changes initiated by Luther in Germany and by Calvin and Zwingli in Switzerland crossed the Channel and took effect in England during the reign of Edward VI.

However, Edward only reigned for six years and he was followed by Mary who re-established the control of the Catholic Church. These were turbulent times with real upheaval in society accompanied by violence and the infamous burnings at the stake. Amongst the martyrs was Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, the principal author and compiler of the Book of Common Prayer which we still use today.

At its heart was a struggle for the identity of the national church in our land. At one end of the spectrum there were those who advocated a complete break with all things Catholic; at the other end there were those who argued for a return to Rome and the traditions of the past. It was unclear for several years which view would prevail.

Mary reigned for just five years, and it was only when Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558 that the long-lasting identity of the Church of England began to emerge. The genius of Anglicanism is that under the patronage of Elizabeth and with the guiding hand of her first Archbishop, Matthew Parker, and the theological insight of Richard Hooker, the Church was able to follow a *via media*, with the Church seeing itself as both Catholic and Reformed. We owe a great deal to Matthew Parker. He it was who coined the phrase “Golden Mediocrity”, not meaning “of moderate quality”, but blending the best of both approaches without being taken over by either extreme. He was able to steer the middle path between unbridled individualism on the one hand and centralised control from Rome on the other.

With reference to the present, whilst we are called to respect the result of the referendum, yet we also need to recognise just how much we share in common with Europe. My prayer is that a *via media* may be found.

Your friend and Vicar, *Richard*

DIARY FOR FEBRUARY 2019

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

3 Presentation of Christ in the Temple: Candlemas

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am All Together Worship

6.30 pm Evensong

4 7.45 pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)

6 9.30 am 'First Steps' (Otford Methodist Church Hall)

10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

8.00 pm Italian Pilgrimage meeting (Church Centre)

9 10.00 am Wedding Preparation morning (Church Centre)

6.30 pm EPIC (Church Centre)

10 The Fourth Sunday before Lent

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Holy Communion

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

11 7.45 pm CAMEO (17 Leonard Avenue)

12 2.15 pm Magazine Editorial Meeting

13 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) refreshments afterwards

2.00 pm Ecumenical meeting (The Vicarage)

17 The Third Sunday before Lent: Septuagesima

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Morning Worship

6.30 pm Evensong

18 8.00 pm St. Bartholomew's Fair Committee (39 Well Road)

20 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

2.30 pm Ecumenical meeting at Otford Methodist Church

Speaker: Sue Mitchell, History Group

8.00 pm Readers' and Revs' Group (10 Flowerfield)

24 The Second Sunday before Lent: Sexagesima

8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00 am Holy Communion

25 7.45 pm CAMEO (17 Leonard Avenue)

- 27 9.30 am 'First Steps' (Otford Methodist Church Hall)
- 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) refreshments afterwards
- 7.45 pm PCC meeting (Church Centre)



Registers



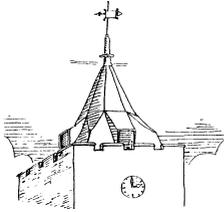
FUNERAL (Our Sympathy)

- 15th December 2018 Frederick **Gunn** (aged 89)
- 19th December 2018 Elizabeth **Mauduit** (aged 90)
- 25th December 2018 Pamela **Hadrill** (aged 102)
- 6th January 2019 Diana **Arnaud** (aged 88)



"I'm updating the 'rota notice-board' rota, rota... do I see a hand...?"

FROM ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH



A PILGRIMAGE TO ROME, ASSISI & RAVENNA

21st-29th October 2019

An introductory meeting for all those interested in coming on a pilgrimage to Italy this autumn will be held on **Wednesday 6th February at 8 pm in the Church Centre**. You are warmly invited to come along and find out more.

ECUMENICAL FELLOWSHIP MEETING

You are invited to join our friends at Otford Methodist Church Hall on **Wednesday, 20th February at 2.30 pm**. After a brief look at the music for this year's World Day of Prayer service, to be held on Friday, 1st March, the speaker will be Sue Mitchell from the History Group. Refreshments will be served afterwards. All are welcome.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The service, put together by Christians of Slovenia, will be held on **Friday, 1st March at 2.00 pm at Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church, Otford**. The theme is 'Come, everything is ready'. The service will be followed by refreshments. Everyone is welcome to this ecumenical event.

CHURCHYARD WORKING PARTY

The first session for 2019 will take place on **Saturday, 2nd March**. 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!

SOUP LUNCH

You are warmly invited to our lunch on **Monday, 11th March from 12-2.00 pm in the Church Centre**. Suggested donation of £5 for home-made soup and bread and a light dessert.

2019 LENT SERIES

"The Kingdom of God is at hand"

Jesus began his ministry by proclaiming, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." Also, the opening phrases of the Lord's Prayer include the petition, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth..." So what does it mean to pray and work for the Kingdom of God? The Anglican Church has highlighted five key areas which can be summed up with the words: tell; teach; tend; transform; treasure.

In other words: proclaim the Good News; make disciples and nurture their faith; serve those in need; work for social justice; and care for our world.

In our Lent Series for 2019 we'll be focusing on each of these areas of work in turn, looking at the Biblical background and highlighting the work of our Mission Link partners around the world. The sessions will be on five Tuesday evenings, from 8- 9.30 pm in the Church Centre, starting on Tuesday 12th March. Do put these dates in your diary and join us.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH FAIR

This will be held on **Saturday 15th June** on and around The Green. Please put the date in your diary and plan to be with us, if you can.

OUT AND ABOUT



OTFORD BROWNIES AND GUIDES would like to thank everyone who supported their Christmas Post Service in December. This was the 36th consecutive year of running the post and the fantastic sum of £427.25 was raised from the sale of stamps. This year the money has been divided between Sevenoaks Community First Responders and Embrace Ability. Thanks must also go to Lorraine in Otford library and Sue in the Parish Office who sell the stamps for us and Gerry and Craig who print our stamps and posters.



OTFORD EVENING W.I.

Our February meeting on the 14th is a Quiz Night. We meet as usual at 7.30pm in the Club Room and visitors are warmly welcome to join us.

Our president can be contacted on 01959 524831 for more information.



Calling all chocolate lovers! The next meeting of the **Otford and District Historical Society** will take place on Wednesday 20th February starting at 8pm in the Club Room of the Otford Memorial Hall.

Fred Lemont will talk about 'The Chocolate Quakers – Cadbury and Rowntree'

FAITH IN THE FAMILY...

February: New ways to encourage

Bible story: Philip and the African Minister

Just before Jesus returned to Heaven, he asked his friends the disciples to go and tell people everywhere all about him. He promised to be with them always in spirit to encourage them as they spread the word.

The twelve disciples (who were now called the apostles, because they spoke and acted in the name of Jesus) needed extra help to do this work. So they chose another seven men, one of whom was Philip. He travelled to a city in Samaria where he told huge crowds all he knew

about Jesus. Many who were unwell came to him and he healed them.

Then an angel told Philip, "Go south to the lonely desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza".

So he set out, and on his way a man overtook him, riding in a chariot. He was the minister in charge of all the money owned by the Queen of Ethiopia. He had heard about the true God and had been to the Temple in Jerusalem to worship. But now he was on the long journey home and he was trying to make sense of some verses written on a Scripture scroll that he had bought there.

Philip felt prompted by the Spirit to catch up with the chariot and to walk alongside it.



“Do you understand what you are reading?” he asked kindly.

“How can I?” replied the man, “unless someone explains it to me. Can *you* help?”

Philip smiled, scrambled up into the chariot and sat next to the man.

“Please, read some out!”

So the man continued. “Like a sheep that goes to be slaughtered, like a lamb that goes to have its wool cut off, he was silent and did not complain,’ he read out. “He was treated unfairly and his life was soon taken from him.”

The man turned his puzzled face towards Philip. “Who is the writer talking about?” he asked. “Tell me, please!”

Philip was so glad to be asked and he answered the man’s question directly.

“Those verses are speaking about Jesus,” he explained. “He willingly died on the cross in place of us – even though *he* had done nothing wrong. He brought us forgiveness and friendship with God again. That’s the Good News! Jesus is our friend and Saviour!”

As they travelled along, Philip patiently answered the man’s questions. At last, they came to a pool of water.

“Look!” cried the man. “Why don’t you

baptize me? I truly believe that Jesus is God’s Son and I want to follow him.”

So they both went down into the water and Philip baptized him. Then the minister continued on his journey, filled with joy and eager to tell his friends about Jesus.

The Bible story: Read the story together as a family and look it up in the Bible.

What is your favourite part of this story?

Have you ever felt God nudging you to help someone? What did you do?

In what ways did Philip encourage the important man?

I wonder how Philip felt when the man asked to be baptized.

I wonder who you are in this story.

I wonder in what ways we can spread news today that wasn’t available to the apostles.

Face time/screen time: As a family, encourage one another to limit screen time and be strict about putting devices away at meal times. Connect with one another face-to-face! Ask what each enjoyed or found difficult that day and about things each one is looking forward to or worried about. Build one another up with praise and tips from experience.

New technology is only as good as the purpose for which it is used. So challenge one another to use it as an encouragement to others, for instance:



To send a “thank you” email for a party or present

To send a text to say “well done” to someone at school

To send a “how are you”



message to someone not well or missing from a club

To send a recipe to someone struggling with cooking, etc

What other ideas can your family come up with?

Inbox encouragement: Did you know that you can sign up to have a Bible verse arrive in your inbox each day? It can be very helpful to put aside five minutes each morning, over a cup of tea, quietly reading this and a short reflection applying the verse to our everyday lives. Let children catch you doing this and discuss the topic on the way to school! It's amazing how often the verse seems directly relevant to things faced that day! It's worth searching the Internet for something that suits you.

Here are a few online ideas for finding encouragement:

wordlive.org A daily devotions website from Scripture Union. There are different ways to connect with it, listen or read.

VerseFirst A community of people exploring the Bible and how it speaks directly to our everyday experience. You can follow on Facebook.

Verse of the day.com Does what it says on the tin!

Bible gateway.com A great site for searching the Bible, for instance to see how many times a word appears and finding linked articles.

Bible Apps

You version This includes devotionals especially for young people and there is a Bible App for kids.

Red Letter Days Read the words of Jesus. You can 'shake' to get a random verse, share with a friend or just go day-by-day in your reading.

Glo Bible Enables you to go deeper into the Bible with videos, pictures, sermons, commentaries, maps and virtual tours. Tap the verse to interact!

Bible in one year Originally produced for the congregation of Holy Trinity, Brompton, with Nicky and Pippa Gumbel, who instigated the Alpha Course.

And don't forget that *Guardians of Ancora* from Scripture Union, is now available to download for free. An amazing virtual world that 8-11 year olds can enter and where Bible stories come alive!

Vicki Howie



A BOOK WHICH INFLUENCED ME...

The Shack

by William Paul Young

"I am what some would say 'holy, and wholly other than you.' The problem is that many folks try to grasp some sense of who I am by taking the best version of themselves, projecting that to the nth degree, factoring in all the goodness they can perceive, which often isn't much, and then call that God. And, while it may seem like a noble effort, the truth is that it falls pitifully short of who I really am. I'm not merely the best version of you that you can think of. I am far more than that, above and beyond all that you can ask or think."

Imagine meeting God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. What would you say to God? What questions would you ask? How would you feel, especially if something had caused you much suffering?

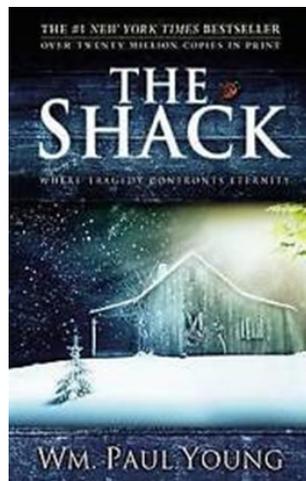
This is the experience of Mack in the story of "The Shack". He is struggling deeply with his faith after a dreadful experience which is pulling his family apart and he does not know how to deal with it. He makes his way to where the incident occurred and falls asleep. When he wakes up he meets with God. However, God is not what he expected at all. Over the next few days Mack is able to spend time with Papa (God the Father), Jesus, Sarayu (God the Holy Spirit) and Wisdom – none of whom are what he expects. He is led gently by God to face his anger, to think about judgment and forgiveness, dealing with some of the most difficult questions many of us have about God.

This book has had mixed reviews and does divide Christians – some love it (like me) and

others do not engage with it. You might not agree with all the ideas in the book, however, it is a fictional book and if read with this in mind you will, hopefully, find it interesting and surprising. The book was released as a film just last year.

I thoroughly enjoy reading the book, and watching the film, as it makes me think more deeply about my relationship with God, my fellow human beings, my expectations of God and central ideas such as judgement and suffering. In my teaching, especially at A level, I use clips from the film to help pupils approach an idea from a fresh perspective. However, I would advise you to watch the film with a box of tissues at your side as there are some immensely moving scenes, which have moved me to tears each time I have watched it (5 times!).

Mags Southgate



DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS

The most important thing to tell you this month is that the Council is now consulting until 3rd February for the final time on the Proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan together with Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Area Designations.

After the consultation closes, the Council will send your comments to the Planning Inspector for consideration. The final decision to approve, amend, or not approve the plan will be taken by the Government Inspector during a public examination. If you would like to speak at the examination, which is entirely at the inspector's discretion, you need to register your interest to do so during this consultation period.

There is more information about the process on the Council's website at: <https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/localplansubmission>

The things in the Local Plan that affect Otford are the Vestry Estate and Bartram Farm, Old Otford Road which have been included for employment use; and the plans for Tarmac Quarry in Sevenoaks Town close to the Otford border.

The Council has to balance its commitment to protect the green belt with the Government's insistence that we must plan for up to 14,000 new homes up to 2035. We plan to achieve this by prioritising brownfield land, such as the Park and Ride site, and build at higher densities in our built up areas.

With 93% of the District currently green belt – the remaining 7% is close to being fully developed – so we had to consider greenfield sites put forward by landowners during our recent call for sites. Of the 400 green belt sites put forward, the Council rejected 388 and asked for residents' views, over the summer,

on the remaining 12. After considering comments from 8,500 residents, we have now published an update proposing just four strategic greenfield sites for new homes:

Tarmac Quarry, Sevenoaks (Sevenoaks Northern Masterplan)

Land east of London Road in Dunton Green

Land south of Four Elms Road, Edenbridge

Pedham Place near Swanley and Farningham as a broad location for growth, subject to further work

The only way the Council can protect the green belt is with a robust Local Plan. Without a plan we could end up with planning by appeal which would be a disaster for Otford and the District as a whole.

After extensive consultation and based on all the evidence we are proposing to deliver 70% of the new homes sought by the Government as we are determined to do all we can to protect the green belt and the District's rural character. If the Planning Inspector approves our Local Plan, developers and the Council will work closely with residents to make sure you get the right community and infrastructure improvements you need.

Have a look at the new Local Plan and if you feel strongly about any aspects of it please take this final opportunity to comment. Remember the final decision is up to the inspector – and developers have the right to appeal directly to them with land that the Council has already rejected.

Best wishes,

Michelle



IN CONVERSATION WITH ... ALISON WALTERS

...in her diamond wedding anniversary year



Born in 1936 in Ilford, Essex, Alison was just a small child when the Second World War began and her parents tried hard to shield her and her older sister from the horrors of the period. With a reserved occupation as a manager in

insurance, her father remained at home. However, when the bombing was heavy, he ensured the safety of his family by periodically evacuating them to Devon and Somerset. The wartime incident which had the greatest impact on Alison involved a school friend called Nina whose father was away on active service. On the day that Nina's mother gave birth to a second child, a bomb landed directly on their house killing Nina, the baby, her mother and the midwife.

Alison attended Redbridge Elementary School and then Beal Grammar School where she particularly enjoyed athletics. Her wish to become a nursery nurse was frustrated when she slipped a disc so she enrolled on a two year teacher training course at St Mary's Teacher Training College in Cheltenham. Her first job was teaching the reception class at Northwold Road School, Clapton – at the heart of a vibrant working class area with a large Jewish population. Her mission was to introduce the children gently to school life so that they would want to come to school. With 42 children on her

class roll and no teaching assistant this was quite a challenge!

To supplement their income students regularly worked at the Post Office at Christmas sorting and delivering cards and parcels. It was here that Alison met her future husband John, then a student at Cambridge University. They became engaged during his third year and their wedding took place on 16th May 1959 at St Andrew's Church, Ilford.



Initially the Walters lived in a small flat in Baker Street, an area they loved but, when Alison became pregnant, they moved in with Alison's parents. Alison gave birth at a large teaching hospital – St George's Hyde Park Corner – but suffered a complete shock when the baby was born severely disabled. In those days there was neither ante-natal screening nor post birth counselling available and Alison was made to stay on the main ward for ten days, becoming an exhibit for the medical students. The baby, David, died at the age of seven and a half months.

Alison had three further children Gareth (1962), Becky (1963) and Teifion (pronounced Tyvion) (1965). By then the family lived in Lee Green, SE

London, and John was working for Coates Brothers – a company serving the printing and packaging industry. In 1967 he signed a three year contract to work in India and



the Walters moved to Calcutta. Alison described their time there as 'the most wonderful experience' and she relished the cultural differences. She admits it was a privileged lifestyle – the household had eight servants – which gave her the chance to learn to play bridge and golf and to rediscover horse-riding! In later years John's job continued to require him to travel widely and Alison accompanied him on many memorable trips.

About a year after their return from India, the family moved to Greenhill Road, Otford and Alison 'made the mistake' of going back to teaching. With John away so frequently, and with three children, two dogs and two cats, it all proved too much so she stopped and started doing voluntary work. Her first role was with Kent County Council reporting on care homes, hostels and centres for people with learning difficulties. She also helped with Dunton Green Luncheon Club for twelve years, became a governor of Otford School, drove boys at Sevenoaks School to their volunteer activities and, most satisfying of all, became one of the first tutors for the Adult Literacy Campaign, enabling the woman she was paired with (Gwen) to make huge progress in her life. In addition Alison became secretary, then chairman, of a Conservative Women's group

called The Pilgrims and was on the fund raising committee of Age Concern, Sevenoaks.

Influenced by some Greenhill Road neighbours who owned a property in the Ardeche, France, in 1989, whilst John was in New York, Alison signed papers to buy 'a roofless ruin' (a former silkworm farm) in the same area. John apparently was 'not delighted'. Much work ensued but eventually the Walters had a small but 'most delightful' dwelling which gave them enormous pleasure over the next 13 years.

Alison joined St Bartholomew's a few years after coming to Otford. A close friend of John's had died suddenly, prompting Alison to re-kindle her Christian faith. The Vicar, David Towne, welcomed Alison back to church and from there her faith has gone from strength to strength. She loves 'the comfort, companionship and music' of the services and being a member of her home group. Although a member of the Prayer Book Society and a self-confessed traditionalist at heart, she is grateful for the variety of services on offer – her favourites being Choral Evensong, parish communion and, each Christmas, the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.

Alison and John have each helped the other through cancer but hardest of all for them was when their son, Gareth, was also diagnosed with cancer. Fortunately he is now healthy again. Alison told me that, although their children have had one or two 'marital mishaps', they are in contact with all seven of their grandchildren who are 'worth everything'. They feel grateful to be here and are looking forward to celebrating their diamond wedding anniversary in May.

Christeen Malan



IN MEMORIAM



Pam Hadrill, 1915 - 2018

Pam lived in Otford for 100 years. She was born in 1915 in Forge Cottage on the High Street. Her father fought in the First World War with the Royal West Kents. Tragically he was killed in Flanders in 1917 when Pam was only 18 months old. Pam and her mother then went to live with her maternal grandparents at Troutbeck by the River Darent, and then they moved to the Mill House when Pam was 4 years old. She attended boarding school in Tunbridge Wells and then Hastings. On leaving school Pam worked as a buyer for John Lewis.

During the Second World War Pam drove ambulances while based at Tunbridge Wells. After D-Day she was posted to Holland, and she was there for VE Day.

After the war Pam returned to Otford, working as a secretary. Pam met her husband Cedric through horse riding in Knole Park. He was 17 years old than Pam, but a romance soon blossomed and they got married in 1948. Cedric worked in insurance with Legal and General.

Pam and Cedric moved into Little Oast in 1949, just across the mill stream from Mill House. It needed a lot renovation and adaptation to become a family home, and Pam lived there until she was 100.

They soon started a family, with the birth of Cherry and then Penny. Cedric retired in 1958, and he was able to devote more time to his young family and his hobbies of music and DIY.

Pam delighted in her family, making clothes for the girls, entertaining friends with generous

hospitality, and spending many hours cultivating their beautiful garden. Pam was a loving mother, encouraging her girls to develop their various interests.

Pam was only 57 when Cedric died at the age of 74. Pam continued to maintain an outward focus. She contributed a great deal to village life, driving for the Darby and Joan Club, baking cakes for horticultural shows, arranging flowers at St. Bart's (particularly on the Mothersill shelf beneath the War Memorial, in memory of her father), and opening her garden for the National Garden Scheme.

With the passing of the years Pam's family grew to include three grandchildren and two great grandchildren. She always took a keen interest in whatever they were doing.

In the last two years of her life she had to move into a nursing home in Tunbridge Wells, and she died on Christmas Day, just 3 days short of her 103rd birthday. She was truly Otford's senior resident and her memory will be cherished by family and friends alike.



SPOTLIGHT ON OUR DIOCESE

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES

In Rochester Diocese, which covers the Medway Towns, the Thames Gateway, west Kent and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley, there are just over 900 social action projects run by Anglican churches.

Of the 233 churches in the Diocese of Rochester who responded to a recent Statistics for Mission request, 93% are involved in one or more form of social action; this is compared to 80% nationally.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's visited our Diocese in October last year, and these figures correspond with his own reflections on the work taking place in churches across the region. He said,

"One of the most striking things has been that so many of the groups are dealing with people who are on the edge, who are incredibly vulnerable and have turned to the Church, and found not that they're judged, but they're loved."

Churches were asked whether they ran projects, hosted them, carried them out in partnership with other groups, or supported them in other ways such as through donations or volunteers. These projects included food

banks, toddler groups, community cafes and night shelters. From the responses it can be said that: 390 projects were run directly by churches; in addition to running projects themselves, churches hosted another 93 projects; a further 130 projects were carried out in partnership with other organisations; and an additional 305 projects were supported by churches in other ways.

Food banks were the most commonly supported type of social action project, with 76% of churches in the Diocese of Rochester supporting food banks in some way, often with volunteers and/or donations, and often in partnership with other organisations.

Bishop James commented: "This work is right at the heart of how we understand God's calling to us. Our vision is of nothing less than a world transformed through the love of Jesus."

Bishop Simon added: "We believe this is what Jesus would have us do. The mark of a society is how well it treats its most vulnerable members and we're trying to make our contribution to that."



FEBRUARY PUZZLE

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple/ Candlemas

Candlemas, 2 February, comes exactly 40 days after Christmas. In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male

child - to 'present Him to the Lord'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. (Luke 2: 22-40) So where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day.



- | | | |
|-----------|------------|--------------|
| Candlemas | Baby | presentation |
| Forty | Boy | described |
| Days | First | light |
| After | Public | world |
| Christmas | Appearance | candles |
| New | Mary | lighting |
| Testament | Jewish | early |
| Important | Temple | |
| Age | festival | |

RECIPE FOR FEBRUARY

This is comfort food for a cold February evening!

1 1/2 – 2 lbs sausage meat

2-3 peppers, sliced or one pack frozen mixed peppers

1-2 onions

3 oz butter

1 x 10 oz tin consommé

1 heaped tablespoon flour

1 teaspoon smoked paprika or a few drops Tabasco

100 ml dry white wine or Dry Martini *

1 egg

Salt and pepper

Cook the peppers gently in 1 oz butter until soft, cool, then mix with the sausage meat, smoked paprika, egg and seasoning. Form into patties and fry gently until browned on both sides.

Soften the onions in 2oz butter, then add flour to form a roux, and stir in the consommé and wine or Dry Martini.

Put the patties into a baking dish, cover with the sauce and cook for around 30 – 40 minutes to ensure that sausage meat is thoroughly cooked.

* None of my family likes Dry Martini but somehow it works really well in this sauce!

Hilary Fothergill



OTFORD HERITAGE TRAIL - OTFORD ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE



Above: A falcon's view of the great palace of Otford when in its prime.

Imagine you are standing at the entrance to the church car park with the pond to your right. To your left, is the top of the one remaining tower of what was once a noble palace. If you had been standing on this spot in May 1520 you would have witnessed King Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon riding past you, accompanied by 3,000 courtiers. Take a look at the tower and gatehouse for yourself.

The history of a palace

Archbishop William Warham began building his great palace at Otford in 1514. The land had been gifted to the Church by the Mercian King Cenwulf (son of King Offa) in AD 821. Over time, a great moated manor house had evolved and was reputed to be 'one of the finest houses in the land'.

Archbishop Thomas Becket often lived here in the 1160s. After his martyrdom in Canterbury Cathedral he was sanctified, and several village myths and legends are associated with Saint Thomas' tenure at Otford. The medieval manor had its own chapel and a Great Hall that could cater for 200 people at a single sitting. In 1348, King Edward III even brought his entire royal court down here to celebrate Christmas whilst

escaping the Black Death which was ravaging London.

Over just four years, from 1514, Warham swept away the old manor buildings and, in their place, built the great Renaissance palace of Otford. It was said to have one of the largest courtyards in Europe. A

year later Cardinal Wolsey, not to be out-done, began work on his own palace at Hampton Court, copying much of what he had seen at Otford.

Warham was succeeded by Archbishop Cranmer, who is said to have begun work on the Book of Common Prayer within these grounds. However, in 1537, Henry VIII took ownership of both Otford Palace and Knole. He spent lavishly on his new acquisition. Within ten years though, he was dead and the palace began to fall into disrepair.



Above: The surviving tower from the south-west, showing the stair tower and the square garderobe (latrine) tower,

Soon, all the expensive lead had been stripped from its roofs and the elements did their worst. Its ruins were thereafter to contribute

building material for many of the great homes in Kent. In the 1700s, Lord Sackville even had the remaining palace frontage removed to Knole Park to create a folly!

Today, just the north-west tower and ground floor of the west frontage with half the original great gatehouse, remain. But peer inside the tower and you might get an impression of how its great rooms may once have looked five hundred years ago during the reign of Henry VIII.

A Day to Remember

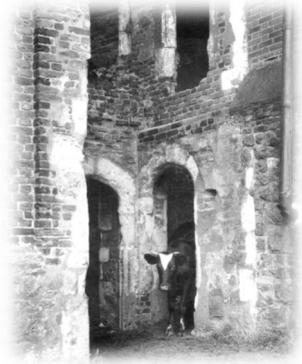


The arrival of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon at the Archbishops' Palace in 1520.

In May 1520, Henry VIII and Queen Catherine of Aragon arrived at the head of a great procession. They spent the night at Otford, and were greeted by Archbishop William Warham who had only just completed building his new palace a few years earlier.

Over the following days Henry and his queen made their way to Dover to embark for Calais. They were heading for their summit meeting with the French King, Francis I, at the 'Field of Cloth of Gold'. The glamour and pomp of this staged event was the finale for the two great Renaissance princes to parade their wealth and status. Seventeen years later Henry acquired Otford Palace for himself.

Right: In Tudor times the palace displayed all the opulence of Renaissance architecture. However, the building was allowed to deteriorate over the centuries. A situation summed up by this 1950s photograph, whose caption reads 'Cattle now roam where once mighty prelates trod'.



Superstition and Becket's Well

Like most rural communities the villagers harboured superstitions whose dread secrets had been passed down from generation to generation. They told stories of deadly snakes 'of the bigness of a man's leg', which 'basked sleepily guarding ancient sites'... a favoured spot for the reptiles was said to be Becket's Well.



'Miracle-working' Becket's Well – a site of ancient legend.



With thanks to Rod Shelton, Phil Clucas and Ed Thompson

GARDENING THROUGH THE YEAR WITH MEMBERS OF OTFORD GARDENERS' SOCIETY

It's official! Spring is on its way!

I write this as 2018 draws to a close and, the longest night already passed, the inexorable march towards the new season has begun. Nature is blissfully unaware of the political and social issues that seem to dominate our lives. Of course, the garden never fully sleeps. There are lots of plants whose flowering period is in these cold, dark months. Viburnum bodnantense, sweet box and winter honeysuckle are all fragrant in my garden at the moment. Winter jasmine is also flowering. The catkins on the hazel are poised and ready to burst into life as soon as the day length and temperature are just right, likewise the flowers of the witch hazel. Down at a lower level, hellebores are starting to flower and there are signs of buds on the snowdrops. Other spring bulbs such as snowflakes and daffodils are showing their fine green leaves in preparation for the flowers to follow. The veg plot is quiet, but there are cabbage, parsnips and leeks still in the ground. The garlic I missed when I dug up the patch in summer is now six inches tall and a clump of red veined sorrel is still producing leaves. There is still a harvest in the trees for the wildlife. My Himalayan tree Cotoneaster is laden with juicy red berries and there remains a crop of crab apples relatively untouched. Perhaps it is being kept in mind for the colder days that the new year will surely bring.

By the time this article is published, the new gardening year for Otford Gardeners' Society, of which I am secretary, will have started. Our February meeting, on the 5th of the month, is our Annual Buffet Supper, an opportunity for everyone to abandon the TV, shake out of our winter slumber and meet up for an informal gathering at our usual venue, the village hall. It is

at this meeting that our new schedule for 2019 becomes available. As I write, I am putting the final touches to the schedule, ready for it to go to the printer. Putting the schedule together is a job I always keep for the winter months. I'm quite excited about our programme for 2019. There is, I hope, something of interest for everybody who is interested in gardening. Our subjects range from the practical to the ornamental and I am particularly pleased to welcome (warning, spoiler alert) Steve Edney from the Salutation Gardens in Sandwich to give our first talk of 2019.

Janet Finney

Gardeners' Society enquiries - 01959 523760

Tip for the month

Weeds spoil a garden so hoe them off before they get into their stride.

They are always easier to remove when they are in their seedling stage and have little hold on the soil.



Cotoneaster

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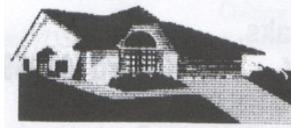
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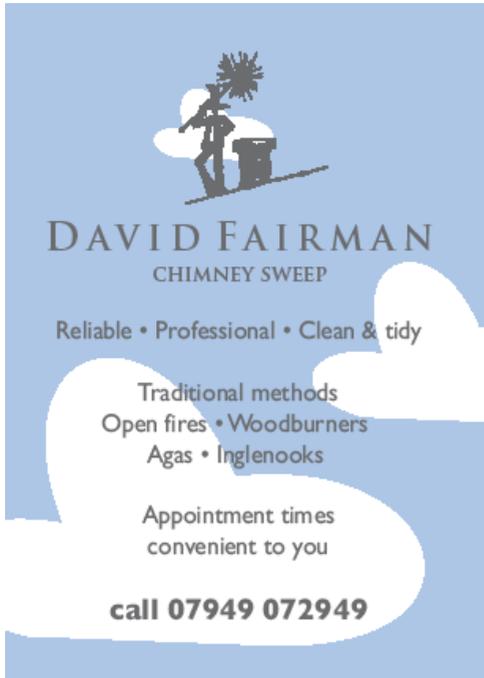
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