

St Bartholomew's Church Otford Parish News



SERVICES AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

October	8am	10am	3pm	6.30pm
6 Oct 16th Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion	All Together Worship	-	Evensong
13 Oct 17th Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	-	-
20 Oct 18th Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	-	Evensong
27 Oct Last Sunday after Trinity	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.

Cover photo: Two of St Bart's homegroups
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FROM THE CHURCHWARDENS



What is a Harvest Festival?

One dictionary definition describes it as ‘a celebration of the annual harvest, especially (in Britain) one held in schools and as a service in Christian churches, to which gifts of food are brought for the poor’.

We give thanks to the parents and children of Otford Primary School, Russell House School and our own congregation for the gifts given at the various Harvest Festival services. These gifts generously given are passed on to the Loaves and Fishes Project in Sevenoaks. This foodbank supports up to 40 families with young children by giving them non-perishable food every week of the year. St. Bart’s have been supporting this project for some time with a donations box located at the back of the Church, donations are delivered to the project on a weekly basis. Current needs can be found on the Loaves and Fishes website.

Harvest Festivals are held in different countries of the world at different times of the year depending on when their main harvest season occurs. In this country we typically celebrate the completion of the harvest towards the end of September or the beginning of October. This links in with the shortening of the days being after the autumnal equinox which this year fell on the 23rd September.

The trees and shrubs in the garden put on a superb show of colour, a last hurrah before they shed their leaves and become silhouettes and outlines in the dark winter days. Or when you go out in the early morning seeing the dew outlining the beautiful cobwebs on the trees or washing lines. There is nothing to beat getting out into the countryside and walking through the woods scuffing up the leaves, finding a few conkers or chestnuts. Remembering the poem, I

learned at school by Keats which starts ‘Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, Close bosom friend of the maturing sun’.

In Leviticus 26 v 4 we find the words ‘I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees of the field their fruit’. By now the farmers have harvested the grain, some will have sown winter barley and other crops in readiness for next year. Crops harvested this year have been stored ready to be used during the coming months. Winter vegetables are still in the fields; I am grateful that I do not have to go out and harvest them on a cold day in the depths of winter.

Towards the end of this month our children and their teachers will be looking forward a week’s holiday and hoping for some fine autumn weather, so they can get out and about perhaps visiting family and friends. This does however, signal the lead up to the changing of the clocks on the 27th when we fall back to darker mornings and evenings, and move towards the colder winter months. A period when perhaps we don’t see so much of our neighbours, to pass the time of day with, or have a longer chat over a cup of tea, to do a bit of shopping for, or even realise we have not seen them for a few days.

*Janet Hunt
Churchwarden*



Registers



FUNERAL (our Condolences)

31st August Kenneth William **Dearing** (aged 80)

Footprints in the Sand

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the LORD.

Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand: one belonging to him, and the other to the LORD.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand.

He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the LORD about it:

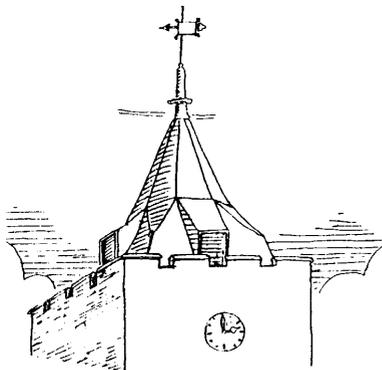
"LORD, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me."

The LORD replied:

"My son, my precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."



FROM ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH



CHURCHYARD WORKING PARTY

We are very grateful to all those who came last month to help in the Churchyard and we look forward to seeing everyone again on **Saturday, 5th October, 9.00-11.30 am**. If anyone can help for an hour or two it would make a difference. Come and join in the fun and bring some useful tools too!

MESSY CHURCH

The next Messy Church event will take place on Sunday 24th November, 3.00 pm in the Church Centre. This is suitable for families with children up to the age of 11. Do come along for some messy fun!

THOMAS BECKET RETURNING TO OTFORD ON SAT 19TH OCTOBER BRINGING KING HENRY II WITH HIM. WELL! WELL! WELL!

850 years after his murder in Canterbury, Becket is coming back to Otford - a place where it's said he particularly enjoyed staying while Archbishop (1162-1170) - in spite of the taste of the water and the songs of its nightingales

which disturbed his devotions.

A Turbulent Priest is a musical from the pen of James Cary. It follows the extraordinary story of Thomas and King Henry, their bromance, bust-up and betrayals. In short, plenty to sing about!

But at heart, the show asks questions about the place of the Church in our society. Does the State have final say over what's right and wrong? Should the Church make a stand and speak out? Are Christians prepared to face the consequences of that stand?

James Cary is an award-winning sitcom writer for TV and Radio. He's the co-writer of *Miranda* and *Bluestone 42* for BBCTV and for Radio 4's *Another Case of Milton Jones*. James is also a member of the House of Laity of the General Synod of the Church of England.

One of his previous plays, *The God Particle*, was performed at Otford Methodist Church last autumn. Following performances at Spring Harvest, Keswick Convention and Brighton Fringe, **A Turbulent Priest** will be on tour this autumn and coming to St Bart's on the evening of Saturday 19th October (6.30pm). Tickets including canape & wine reception to follow £12 (main aisle), £8 (side aisle - restricted view). Box office 01959 524304 or online from www.omc.org.uk

NOVEMBER SOUP LUNCH

Do join us on Monday 11th November (12-2.00 pm) in the Church Centre and enjoy the delicious homemade soups and bread, with a light dessert, in very genial company. Please sign the list on the book table at the back of church to let us know that you are coming. Our

coffee-time guests will be 'Reflections' a small band of church instrumentalists, who will perform some simple songs with a Remembrance theme. We hope that 'Reflections' will give a concert for us in the church next spring. Suggested donation £5.

CHRISTMAS PUDDING WORKSHOP

Saturday, 16th November in the Church Centre at 2.30 pm. Please save the date for the return of this popular event! Get ahead for Christmas and pause for a delicious afternoon tea in good company. Come with a family member or friend! To book your place/find out more, please 'phone Joan Beacom (01959 54304).

CHRISTMAS MARKET

This will take place in the Church Centre on Saturday, 23rd November from 10.00-12 noon.

Stalls will include: gift wrapping; cards; Christmas tree and table decorations; candles; cakes; bulbs (the growing kind!); Christmas sweets and chocolates and a craft stall. A super Christmas raffle is also planned. Please put this date in your diary and come and enjoy a happy time with your family and friends, joining together in support of our church work.

CHURCH OFFICE AND CHURCH CAR PARK

During the clerical vacancy (September onwards) the church and church car park will only be open during church office hours - Monday to Friday 9am-12.30pm.

If you wish to visit the church at another time please contact the church office 01959 523185 or st.bartholomews@otford.net

CHURCH ORGAN CLEANING

Further to the previous notice, part of the church organ is being cleaned from 2nd October. During this maintenance work the church will only be open for Sunday services until the end of the month. Thank you for your understanding.

RIDE AND STRIDE

Congratulations to the Holmes and Brown families for their efforts during the Friends of Kent Churches sponsored Ride and Stride in September. The Holmes family managed to visit 31 churches during the day!

Total sponsorship should come to over £1,000. If you supported the Holmes family in their endeavors please make sure you pass your sponsor money to Mark Holmes or you can drop it in at the church office any weekday morning.

FAITH IN THE FAMILY...

October: God's exciting plan!

Bible story: From shepherd boy to king

There was once a boy called David who had seven big brothers.



One day, the oldest brothers left home to fight in a battle.

"Can I come, too?" asked David.

They shook their heads. "You're much too young to fight," they said.

"Stay at home and look after the sheep. But look out for hungry lions and bears! They would like to eat the lambs – and they would like to eat you, too!"

So David sat on the hillside playing his harp . . . **twing, twang** . . . and firing

stones with his catapult . . . **bing, bang!**

And what should come prowling on big furry paws, licking its lips and sharpening its claws, but a huge, hungry . . . LION!

It snatched a lamb – just like that!

"Give me back my lamb," ordered David, "or I'll shake you till your teeth rattle."

The lion roared with laughter.

"Why you're only a boy! I could pin you to the floor with just one paw!"

"I may be small," said David, "but God is big and strong and he will help me!"

And he fought the lion until it dropped the frightened lamb.

David was so pleased, that he played a 'thank you' song to God on his harp . . . **twing, twang** . . . and he fired more stones with his catapult...**bing, bang!**

Then what should come prowling on big furry paws, licking its lips and sharpening its claws, but a big, brown . . . BEAR!

It snatched a lamb – just like that!

"Give me back my lamb," ordered David, "or I'll shake you till your teeth rattle."

The bear gave a growly laugh.

"Why, you're only a boy! I could pin you to the floor with just one paw!"

"I may be small," said David, "but God will help me!"

And he fought the bear until it dropped the frightened lamb.

David went to visit his brothers at the battle to tell them the sheep were safe. But while they were busy talking, who should come stamping through the bushes with a great big spear . . . *not* a roaring lion and *not* a growling bear but . . . a great big GIANT called Goliath!

"Who will come and fight me?" he bellowed.

The big brothers suddenly felt very small. But David looked up at the giant and said "I will fight you!" Just like that!

Goliath gave a THUNDEROUS laugh.

"Why, you're only a boy! I could squeeze you into sand with just one hand!"

"Well," said David. "God helped me fight a lion and he helped me fight a bear and now he will help me to fight *you!* Everyone will know he is the true God!"

And he fired a small stone from his catapult.

BANG!

“Yay! The giant is dead!” yelled the brothers, lifting David high onto their shoulders.

“I may be small,” sang David happily, “but God makes me feel nine feet tall!”

Twing, twang!

Parents pause for thought: At Sunday Club, we have been looking at the story of David – the shepherd boy who grew to be one of the greatest kings of Israel.

After he defeated Goliath, King Saul took him into his household where he made a name for himself in battle and was given one of the king’s daughters in marriage. Although he was a flawed character, God was with him and he wrote many songs of thanks and praise to God which we find in the Psalms.

No doubt our children have grown in the summer holidays! As parents, we may also want them to grow in their understanding of

God – to grow spiritually.

The following activities might help them to remember the story of David and to fulfil their own God-given potential.



David fights the giant (1 Samuel 17) Read the story above as a family and add any mimes you can (strumming a harp, flexing muscles, etc!) Wonder about it together:

I wonder if you ever feel annoyed that you are too young/old to do something?

I wonder how David felt when he had to stay at home to look after the sheep?

Do you think that being a shepherd was an important job?

Do you mind doing chores?

Do you think David looked after the sheep well?



I wonder what things he did as a shepherd that helped him to be able to fight Goliath later on.

Who did David say would help him to have victory over the giant?

Sometimes our own problems can seem like giants to overcome! I wonder how this Bible story can help us?

Photo albums: As the evenings get darker, look through photos of family members from babies to adults. Chat about how we grow physically and mentally and what helps us to do so (healthy food/exercise for our bodies, books, schoolwork for our brains). We are also spiritual beings. How can we grow in our awareness of God? (Reading Bible stories, talking to God in prayer every day and keeping going with church and Sunday Club.) Chat about how we can lead healthy lives by having a good balance of physical, mental and spiritual activity.

What do you want to be? Chat about the jobs you or grandparents do/did.

When did this path become clear? Was there any event that sparked it? Do children have any ideas about what they might like to do? Point out that God has an exciting plan for each one of us if we choose to try and find out what that might be. Sometimes things happen to us that are preparing us for the future. They might seem bad at the time (perhaps a trip to hospital) but events might lead to a particular pathway (eg. a medical career or volunteering).



Vicki Howie

NEWS FROM OTFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL



The new academic year is now in full swing at Otford Primary, the summer seems a distant memory – a warm welcome back to all our students and teaching staff. We have now welcomed all our new reception children and after the initial settling in sessions, they are now full time members of the Otford school community.

Over the summer we were fortunate enough to have building and maintenance work happening within the school. A new classroom has been established and others have been brought up to high specifications. We are always working hard to improve the facilities and the environment for the children.

Otford Primary is not all about academic work, we are lucky enough to have an extensive range of extra-curricular activities on offer to the children. There are clubs before and after school, as well as during lunchtime. Sporting

clubs include football, multi skills, tag rugby, keep fit, tennis, dance, Jujitsu and even a new fencing club. We also have fine art club, games club, theatre skills, rhythmix music, ukulele club and gardening club. There is something for everyone..... It's fantastic to see so many children trying new activities and starting new hobbies.

Louise Brown



RECIPE OF THE MONTH ...

Carrot Soup

This recipe is a great soup which goes down well served with some lovely fresh crusty bread and butter.

Ingredients - Serves 6

1 large onion, finely chopped

5 large carrots, peeled and sliced

1 tablespoon olive oil

500ml water

1 vegetable stock cube

A bouquet garni

Preparation - 10 minutes and 20 minutes to cook.

Put the olive oil in a saucepan and cook the onions over a medium heat for 5 minutes, or until tender.

Add the carrots, water and stock cube and bouquet garni to the saucepan. Bring to the boil and simmer for 20 minutes.

Put the soup in your blender or food processor and puree until smooth.

Add a tablespoon of crème fraiche before serving if you wish.



IN CONVERSATION WITH ... JOAN BEACOM

Active member of St Bart's!

Describing herself as a 'baby boomer', Joan was born in 1947 in Stockwell, London. Her parents had met at the age of fourteen, when her mother was an apprentice bookbinder and her father an apprentice compositor (type setter), and had married at twenty during the war. The second of three girls, Joan enjoyed a stable family life which included churchgoing, lots of card games and much anticipated summer holidays in the UK. These trips inspired in Joan a lifelong affection for Devon, particularly the South Hams area. The family didn't have a garden but Joan spoke about the girls' freedom to roam the streets and about games of cricket with chalk stumps being drawn on any suitable wall. When Joan was fourteen the family took their first holiday abroad, driving through France and down into Italy where Joan fell in love with Florence – a city to which she has returned on more than one occasion.

At school Joan enjoyed maths, cookery and history and also proved talented at sport. As a teenager she was chosen to represent her school on an outward bound activity which was to walk from Farnham to Canterbury along the Pilgrims' Way. The group stopped in Otford with Joan little knowing that one day she would live there. No one from Joan's family had been to university and, at sixteen, she left school to start work. She joined the Union Castle Line shipping company and, after a spell in the City, moved to their Bond Street office where she had 'a most enjoyable job' booking customers onto cruises.

From an early age Joan was involved with the Brownies and Guides, later becoming a Brown

Owl. It was through this role that she first met her husband Brian who was then a Cub helper; they were both participating in a practice session, in the vicarage garden of their local church (St John's, Clapham), putting up tents for Guide camp. In 1967 they were married in St John's with a Brownie guard of honour. The Beacoms bought a house in Chelsfield and Joan



immediately had to acquire new skills since she had never previously lived anywhere with a garden. The family expanded with the birth of Penny in 1972 and James in 1974. When James was 10 weeks old

the family moved to Otford which proved quite a challenge with two small children and a dog!

Once settled in Otford Joan decided to go to night school to do her maths 'O' Level. She so enjoyed studying that she then undertook an English 'A' Level which she completed in one year, achieving an A grade, whilst also falling pregnant with her third child, Matthew. All three children showed strong musical talent: Joan



recalled how car journeys would resound with singing and added that there can't have been many households

where the children fought for a turn on the piano to do their practice!

When Matthew turned five Joan enrolled at Canterbury Christ Church to do a part time BA degree in English with Educational Studies. It was a proud moment when, five years later, with her family present, Joan received her degree in Canterbury Cathedral. Joan then became an articulated teacher for two years before fully qualifying and accepting a job at Amherst School where she taught Year 4 classes for many years. It was a role she absolutely loved, relishing the autonomy of the job and the variety of subjects covered.

Just after Christmas 1998 the family were beset by tragedy when their middle son, James, died at the age of 24 as a result of mental health issues. An extremely bright young man, he had been close to finishing a PhD in Computer Science at Warwick University and had already had work published.

Eventually Joan returned to teaching but, after a period of illness, chose to take early retirement and decided to develop some new interests: trying 'something cerebral' – bridge, 'something creative' – flower arranging and 'something social' – the WI. She still enjoys the bridge and flower arranging and is responsible for organising the flowers in church. Other church roles include

several terms served on the PCC, leading the Events Team, helping at soup lunches, Messy Church, the Christmas Market and the Church Fair (as a committee member and running the tea stall). Furthermore she is St Bart's Safeguarding Officer, a sidesperson and takes a turn at serving coffee after church!

Joan has now become a carer for her husband, Brian, and said she has faced a steep learning curve in trying to establish what help and entitlements are available to them. Whilst the NHS has been excellent in dealing with medical problems, the subsequent support and aftercare are proving difficult to identify and obtain.

Despite these problems, the family enjoyed a holiday in Turkey earlier this year. Joan has many happy memories of trips abroad including ones to China, Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the USA and to continental Europe. Joan also enjoys cookery, gardening, swimming and watching sport; whenever possible she goes to the Olympic Stadium (athletics), Wimbledon and Twickenham. However, the highlight of 2019 was undoubtedly the wedding of daughter Penny to Colin Anderson on Saturday May 4th! Calling herself as a 'glass half full' person, Joan concluded that 'life is good'.

Christeen Malan



DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS

News from Sevenoaks District Council – Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership

The Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership, linking Swanley to Sevenoaks, launched on Sunday 1 September 2019 with a train full of entertainment and special guests.

The lunch event began at Swanley rail station where guests, including local Mayors and several District, Town and Parish Councillors, were taken by train along the Darent Valley line stopping at Eynsford, Shoreham and Otford. Entertainment on board included a magician and live music and guests were able to disembark at Bat and Ball for refreshments. The grand finale to the launch was a vintage bus to take guests to the final stop, Sevenoaks rail station.

The Partnership aims to promote the scenic train route between Swanley and Sevenoaks bringing together six railway stations: Swanley, Eynsford, Shoreham, Otford, Bat & Ball and Sevenoaks.

The Darent Valley rail project will promote tourism by train and active travel (walking or cycling) whilst raising awareness of our local heritage and well-known landmarks on the route, and of the artist Samuel Palmer. Sights of interest include The Hop Shop and Mount Vineyard in Shoreham, Otford Palace, Lullingstone Roman Villa in Eynsford, The Stag Theatre in Sevenoaks and many country pubs and more along the way.

The Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership has been developed to connect communities between Swanley and Sevenoaks. It is hoped that the railway partnership will act as a platform to promote the local economy and increase footfall at local attractions.

Encouraging both visitors and residents to use train and active travel will be more environmentally friendly and will help to ease congestion in our villages and on local roads.

Community Rail Partnerships are a growing nationwide grassroots movement that encourage communities to make the most their railways and opportunities to get involved with their local railway line. There are currently 60 Partnerships across the UK and their objectives are to promote wider use of train services to benefit social inclusion, the economy, community and wellbeing. Engaging with new users by bringing railways into the community will help to develop new habits and increase sustainable travel choices.

The Darent Valley Community Partnership is being supported by Sevenoaks District Council, Sevenoaks Town Council, Swanley Town Council, Eynsford Parish Council, Shoreham Parish Council, Otford Parish Council, the Association of Community Rail Partnerships, Govia Thameslink and Southeastern.

If you would like to get involved and help shape the future of the Darent Valley Railway, or for more information about the community rail partnership, please email tourism@sevenoaks.gov.uk. For more information on local tourist attractions visit: www.visitsevenoaksdistrict.co.uk.

Cllr Irene Roy
Member for Otford &
Shoreham
cllr.roy@sevenoaks.gov.uk
Tel: 01959 525610



OUT AND ABOUT



OTFORD EVENING WI

At our October meeting Lin Saines will tell us the story of the machine that made

Diana, Princess of Wales' wedding lace - the Pantograph.

We meet on Thursday the 10th of October at 7.30pm in the Club Room of the Memorial Hall and visitors are very welcome.

Bargain time is here again.... our annual TABLE TOP SALE is on the 19th of October in the Memorial Halls from 9.00 - 12 noon.

To book a table, contact Chris on 01959 522485.



THE KEMSING SINGERS

Its that time again when the summer is behind us and autumn activities erupt in our diaries like a rash. So add to them the chance of singing with the wellknown Kemsing Singers who will have commenced rehearsals on Monday, 9th September.

We welcome anyone interested in singing with us, so please just appear on a Monday evening at 7.30 pm at St.Edith's Hall, Kemsing, and introduce yourself to Sara Kemsley, our Musical Director, or any other member, or contact our Secretary, Margaret Holgate, 01732 454448 or visit www.kemsingsingers.com for more information.



OTFORD-NEUFCHATEL-HARDELOT TWINNING ASSOCIATION

With apologies for cancelling the September Social Gathering. Our next Gathering will be on Monday 28 October from 7.30pm. We look forward to your joining us as always.

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY MEETINGS IN OTFORD,

Three history groups meet regularly in Otford Village Memorial Hall. The **Otford and District Historical Society**, the **1940s Society** and the **North-West Kent Family History Society**. Meetings of all societies are open to the public. ODHS annual membership from September to May for nine meetings is £10 per adult, or £3 per meeting. The 1940s Society has six meetings per year and admission is £3 per meeting. Annual membership for the NWKFHS is £10 and visitors are asked for a contribution. Refreshments are available at all meetings. **Doors open at 19.30 and the talks generally start at 20.00.**

Next meetings

NWKFHS - 10th October: Dickens in Kent (Christopher Bull)

ODHS - 16th October: Black Travellers in 19th Century Africa (David Killingray)

OTFORD HERITAGE TRAIL - THE OLD PARSONAGE AND THE SCHOOL

Imagine you are standing in front of what was once the home of the village school's headmaster. He was a tireless contributor to the parish, acting as parish clerk, choirmaster, organist, cricketer, local historian and a leading light in gaining Otford its railway station. On your right, through the ornate iron gates you can see the Old Parsonage. Behind you are Hackett's Cottages though they no longer bear that name.

THE OLD PARSONAGE



A home considered too good for the local parson.

The original hall house consisted of a hall, open to the roof timbers, with a parlour and bed chamber portioned off at its east (left) end, and a buttery, beer house and milk house in the west end. An open hearth would have burnt in the centre of the hall.

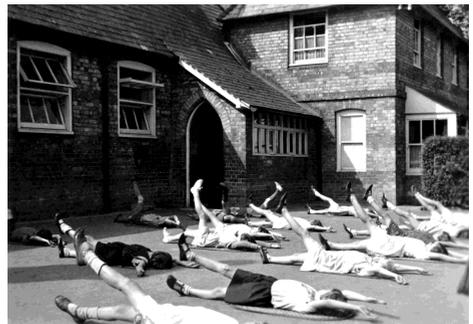
Originally it was used as a parsonage for the parish priest of Shoreham-with-Otford as Shoreham had no parsonage of its own. In 1555, shortly after the Reformation, the church authorities updated and enlarged it. They relocated the curate into a cottage in the grounds and sought a wealthier tenant! Two rear wings and chimneys were added. Four carved stone fireplaces were constructed and later all the windows were glazed.

In about 1770, the Old Parsonage was reduced in size. Its whole east wing was removed and its west (kitchen) wing was truncated. The jettied (overhanging) front was straightened, and brick and hanging tiles were overlaid. By the 1800s it was sub-let to a succession of local farmers and the house steadily became run-down. In 1871 it was used as the village bakery. Early in the last century the house was privately purchased and deservedly restored as a home.

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

In 1806, the first village school room was created in a small building on The Green in front of the church. Originally, about 30 Otford children were taught to read and write there. In 1833 it became a National School, and by 1864 the school had 67 pupils. The infant school had 71.

In 1874, the foundations of today's building were laid. It was designed by Sir T.G. Jackson who became an architect of considerable repute. Notice its attractive hipped roof on the side nearest The Bull. The new school taught children up to the age of 16 in mixed classes of all ages.



Pupils exercise on rush-mats in a sunny school playground in 1938.



In 1878, a new school master joined. He was Richard Hoff and was just 23. A tall, commanding figure with long sideburns, he

continued as head teacher for another 40 years, only retiring in 1919. When he joined there were 91 pupils. When he left, there were over 160. He was assisted by his wife, daughter and just two assistants – a daunting task.

Today the school register numbers about 400 pupils, who are still called to class each morning by the school bell which has rung from its roof-top belfry for over 140 years.

HACKET'S COTTAGES (36-40 HIGH STREET)

These cottages are probably Otford's least altered Georgian cottage row. They stand opposite the Old Parsonage, which in Georgian

times was called Parsonage Farm. It had over 50 acres of land. In 1748 the farm was let to John Golding and it is said that he built these cottages for his foreman, William Hacket, and his farm workers. You can still see the inscription on the cottage front which reads 'W.H.1762'.

Before the line of homes was built, there was an earlier house on the site of number 36. Though mostly demolished, its 17th century great chimney and inglenook were preserved and incorporated into the new buildings (visible on its left-hand side). Hacket, as foreman at that time, was given this more prestigious, detached house. Notice its stone plinth and the stylish Flemish bond brickwork, where bricks are placed alternately as headers and stretchers. It is thought the alterations evident above the doorway of no. 38 may have been due to changes made when the home was converted into a non-conformist meeting house for a period.



Hacket's Cottages in the 1760's



With thanks to Rod Shelton, Phil Clucas and Ed Thompson

MISSION MATTERS



The Bible Society is one of St Bartholomew's long term mission partners. The Society works both nationally and internationally, providing Bible resources and courses, translations and and other support in areas suffering from natural disaster or war and in areas of growing Christianity such as China.

In Syria with many of the remaining population existing in fear and deprivation the Society's work is in great demand . The following reports on the work of the Aleppo Bible Society office.



'In the midst of war and suffering, we are discovering an unprecedented demand for Scriptures – from both Christians relying on God more than ever, and Muslims looking for an alternative to the extreme expression of Islam they see around them.

Our team are busy distributing Bibles – alongside everyday necessities like food parcels, toiletries, and mattresses – to families who find themselves living in refugee camps. We also run bookshops in the region, including one in the city of Aleppo – just 150 metres from the frontlines of the war in Syria.

With no education, few playful distractions and a fear of the unknown, daily life for a child in the refugee camps is a far cry from what it should be. That's why we commit to providing picture Bibles, colouring books, comic books and stationery that brighten many a day for these children.

We also provide Bible-based trauma counselling for children in Lebanon and Jordan who have witnessed the horrors of war and persecution and have had to flee their homeland.'

The Bible, something we take for granted, a message we ignore, the book that sits gathering dust. The same one that changes lives around the world, and it can change and help ours as well.

www.biblesociety.org.uk



PUZZLE PAGE

October brings us Harvest, and Psalm 65 expresses it perfectly: "You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with corn, for so you have ordained it... You crown the year with your bounty, and your

carts overflow with abundance... the hills are clothed with gladness, the meadows are covered with flock and the valleys are mantled with corn; they shout for joy and sing."

D	U	M	N	R	O	C	M	O	N	D	R
S	N	A	E	E	S	I	A	R	P	C	P
E	K	T	T	A	S	E	R	I	R	L	N
P	A	C	F	G	D	R	R	C	D	A	N
W	U	H	O	S	N	O	O	H	O	O	W
O	D	M	S	L	N	I	W	E	O	V	B
C	R	O	P	S	F	H	S	S	F	E	S
A	K	E	T	K	E	K	N	S	L	R	E
R	R	R	R	A	I	N	S	R	E	F	A
E	A	O	T	H	A	N	K	F	U	L	M
C	G	O	O	D	N	E	S	S	S	O	B
D	E	C	N	A	D	N	U	B	A	W	N

Corn

Rain

Mud

Wheat

Abundance

Goodness

Riches

Pumpkins

Marrows

Water

Thankful

Food

Crops

Soften

Carts

Overflow

Praise

Care

Blessing

Meadows

flocks

A BOOK WHICH INFLUENCED ME ...

Phoebe: a story by Paula Gooder

Sometimes the world of first century Christianity seems so far removed from our own it is often difficult to engage in the lives, culture and environment of those to whom the letters of Paul were written.

This book helps you to do that, to an extent which I have not encountered before, even through film or TV programmes. Phoebe is mentioned just once in the Bible in Romans 16: Be sure to welcome our friend Phoebe in the way of the Master, with all the generous hospitality we Christians are famous for. I heartily endorse both her and her work. She's a key representative of the church at Cenchrea. Help her out in whatever she asks. She deserves anything you can do for her. She's helped many a person, including me.

Paula Gooder has Phoebe as the deliverer of Paul's letter, to the Roman church in Rome, who accepts the hospitality of Priscilla and Aquila (see also Romans 16). The book brings to life what Rome would have been like at the time describing clearly the cosmopolitan culture of the city. The church itself would have been a very mixed group of people: Jews, Romans, Greeks, free and slaves, upper and working class, men and women all worshipping together. This rich mixture also meant differing approaches to understanding Paul's writings, so there are some interesting discussions.

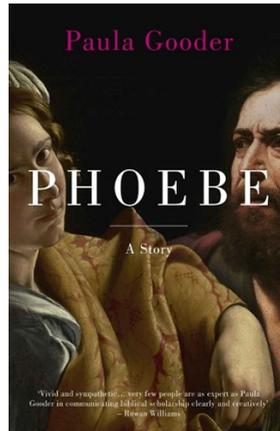
One chapter I found particularly moving was when Peter visits and speaks about his experience of being forgiven by Jesus, by the Sea of Galilee about a month after having denied knowing Jesus 3 times; it actually moved me to tears. "Forgiveness is far more

complex than at first you might think." Peter tells the group, "It's like a huge tangled ball; like one of my nets after a particularly frustrating night at sea. One moment. One phrase, 'I forgive you', might loosen one of the threads, but the rest remains, and takes much, much more work. Jesus knew that too." Why did Jesus ask him 3 times if Peter loved him? "He was working at that knotted, muddled ball, and allowing me to unravel the knots myself. It was a long, painful process, but little by little the knots start to come free."

However, Peter also explains, "Being forgiven and accepting you are forgiven are two very different things." Jesus forgives but we have to learn and work out what that looks like living it out each day.

Paula Gooder is a British theologian and Anglican lay reader who specialises in the New Testament. She is Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral. In the book she makes it very clear which facts are in the Bible and which she has used from research and knowledge about first century Christianity in the Roman Empire.

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