



St Bartholomew's Church
Otford Parish News

December 2019

www.stbartholomews.co.uk

£1

SERVICES AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

December	8am	10am	3pm	6.30pm
1 Dec Advent Sunday	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	-	Advent Carol Service
8 Dec 2nd Sunday of Advent	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Christingle	-
15 Dec 3rd Sunday of Advent	Holy Communion	Sunday Club Nativity and YPF Presentation	-	Choir Concert (7pm)
22nd Dec 4th Sunday of Advent	Holy Communion (BCP)	Holy Communion	-	Service of Nine Lessons and Carols
24th Dec Christmas Eve	-	-	Crib Service (4pm)	11.30pm Mid-night Communion (preceded by carols 11.10pm)
25th Dec Christmas Day	Holy Communion (9am)	Christmas Family Service (10.30am)	-	-
29th Dec 1st Sunday after Christmas	-	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: Nine Lessons and Carols taken by Jane Mucklow

www.janemucklowphotography.co.uk

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CHURCHWARDEN'S REFLECTION

As I sit looking out of the window on a very wet and windy day, the sea is a very dark blue with sand coloured sections closer to shore. I can hear waves breaking on the shingle beach. I know that there are many ships out in the Straight of Dover; I can see them on the online shipping chart. However, looking out to sea there is nothing to be seen anywhere on the horizon. Whilst looking out to sea this chorus which we used to sing in Sunday School came to mind.

*Wide, wide as the ocean,
high as the heaven above;
Deep, deep as the deepest sea
is my Saviour's love.
I, though so unworthy,
still am a child of His care;
For His Word teaches me
that His love reaches me everywhere.*

The last line really resonated with me especially during this period of Clerical Vacancy as God is a constant source of encouragement at this time. No matter where we are or the situation we are in, God is always present.

We are now in the season of Advent; a time of preparation and looking forward to Christmas, when we remember the coming of Christ into the world.

Many people are currently involved in preparations for a variety of services during the coming month, although different in their style they are all ways in which we can prepare for the birth of Christ at Christmas:

The Choir and School Carol Concerts
The Christingle Service
Carols and Cake
Nativity Plays
Nine Lessons and Carols

Then as we get closer to Christmas Day, there is the Crib Service on Christmas Eve, and Midnight Communion that lead us into a time of celebration and form the culmination of our preparations during Advent.

Not only are we preparing for Christmas at this time, but we are also preparing for a new Vicar.

Waiting for the appointment of a new Vicar can be a challenge for many in the congregation and also for the leadership team within the parish. We give thanks to all the visiting clergy who have been and continue to lead our services of holy communion and to our lay readers for taking our other services during the period of clerical vacancy.

Members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) have been working very hard over the last three months on the production of a Parish Profile. This document gives information to potential candidates about the village and church; both the buildings and the people who live here. It includes a job specification and the ideal qualities we would be looking for in any of the candidates who might think of applying for the role of Vicar. The final version of the document should be completed by the PCC in the middle of December ready to forward to our Archdeacon Julie Conalty, Area Dean Tim Hatwell and to Westminster Abbey (our Patron) for their comments and observations prior to advertising the role in early January.

Whilst the Advent Season lasts for a period of four Sundays' the expectant waiting for a new Vicar takes considerably more time. We thank you for your continued prayers and support during this period.

Wishing you all a very happy and healthy Christmas.

Janet Hunt



DIARY FOR DECEMBER 2019

1 ADVENT SUNDAY

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (Rev. Andrew Procter)
10.00 am Morning Worship
6.30 pm Advent Carol Service
- 2 7.45 pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)
3 8.00 pm Homegroup (Park Farm House)
4 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) (Rev. Chris Johnson) refreshments afterwards
7 9.00 am Christingle-making (Church Centre)
1.30 pm Wedding of Peter Tyrrell and Lucy Turner (Rev. Anne Bourne)

8 The Second Sunday of Advent

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (Rev. Canon Derek Carpenter)
10.00 am Holy Communion (Rev. Canon Derek Carpenter)
4.00 pm Christingle
- Magazine material for the January edition by today, please, to the Church Office,
st.bartholomews@otford.net**
- 9 10.30 am Magazine meeting
7.45 pm CAMEO (17 Leonard Avenue)
- 10 6.30 pm Otford Primary School Carol Service (in Church)
11 9.30 am 'First Steps' Christmas Service (Otford Methodist Church Hall)
10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) (Rev. Adie McCall)
- 12 6.30 pm Russell House School Carol Service (in Church)
13 7.00 pm Tree of Light Service (St. Bartholomew's Church and then on The Green)
14 2.30 pm Carols and Cake (Church Centre)
6.00 pm EPIC (Church Centre)

15 The Third Sunday of Advent

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (Rev. Andrew Procter)
10.00 am YPF Christmas Presentation and Sunday Club Nativity Play
7.00 pm Choir Christmas Concert (in Church)
- 16 7.45 pm CAMEO get-together (17 Leonard Avenue)
17 8.00 pm Homegroup Christmas party (Park Farm House)
18 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) (Rev. Adie McCall) refreshments afterwards

22 The Fourth Sunday of Advent

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) (Rev. Andrew Procter)
10.00 am Holy Communion (Rev. Andrew Procter)
6.30 pm Service of Nine Lessons and Carols by candlelight
Followed by refreshments in the Church Centre

- 24 **Christmas Eve**
4.00 pm **Crib Service**
11.10 pm **Carols followed by**
11.30 pm **Midnight Choral Christmas Communion (Rev. Brian Stevenson)**
- 25 **Christmas Day**
9.00 am **Holy Communion (Rev. Nicky Harvey)**
10.30 am **All Together Christmas Worship**
- 29 **The First Sunday after Christmas**
10.00 am **Holy Communion (Rev. Chris Reed)**
- 30 7.45 pm **CAMEO (17 Leonard Avenue)**



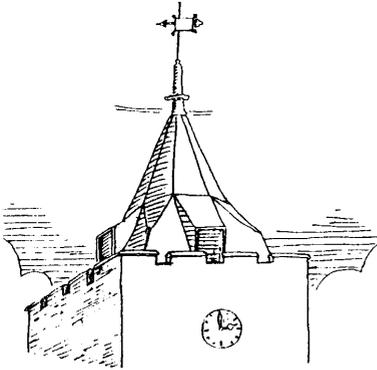
Registers



FUNERAL (Our Sympathy)

- 9th September Francis **Bankes** (aged 78)
27th October Anne **Fleetwood** (aged 80)
3rd November Marianne **Shelton** (aged 81)

FROM ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH



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

LOAVES AND FISHES FOOD BANK

"Thank you to the congregation of St. Bartholomew's Church for their generous donation to our Food Bank. We really value your continuing support throughout the year, which is always a welcome boost to our stores. We continue to support local families who are struggling to make ends meet and rely on the generosity of our regular donors, so would like to pass on our sincere thanks and appreciation." (Loaves and Fishes Food Bank, Sevenoaks)

ADVENT TRAVELLERS

During Advent we are running the Advent Travellers scheme whereby members of the congregation play host to the crib figures of Mary and Joseph for one night as they travel around the village before returning to church on Christmas Eve.



CANDLELIT ADVENT SERVICE

You are warmly invited to this special service to mark the beginning of Advent on Sunday, 1st December at 6.30 pm. The candlelight of the chandeliers provides a memorable setting for the theme of Advent as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, who is the Light of the World.

CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

This popular service will be held at 4.00 pm, on Sunday, 8th December.

SCHOOL CAROL SERVICES

We look forward to welcoming local schools to church for their Carol Services: Otford Primary School on Tuesday, 10th December at 6.30 pm and Russell House School on Thursday, 12th at 6.30 pm.

TREE OF LIGHT SERVICE

This will be held on Friday, 13th December, starting in St. Bartholomew's Church at 7.00 pm followed by the switching on of the lights on the tree on The Green. All are welcome and labels to remember those who have died may be obtained from the Parish Office in the High Street, or from the Hospice in the Weald. Donations will support the work of the Hospice.



CHOIR CHRISTMAS CONCERT

This will be held in Church on Sunday, 15th December at **7.00 pm**. £7 on the door (entry for children is free).

CAROLS AND CAKE

Save the date of **Saturday 14th December** and join us in the Church and Church Centre at 2.30pm to sing your favourite carols and enjoy some refreshments.



NATIVITY REHEARSALS

At Sunday Club on 1st and 8th December, we will spend some time getting ready for our nativity presentation in church on 15th December. Do come

and join in the fun!

SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

This popular choral service will be held on **Sunday, 22nd December at 6.30 pm in Church**, followed by refreshments in the Church Centre.

SOUP LUNCH - 13th January, 12-2.00 pm

The first Soup Lunch of 2020 will take place on Monday, 13th January. More details to follow.

CHRISTMAS SERVICE DATES

Do save the date and come and join us!

Do make sure you have these dates and times in your diaries!

1st Dec. Candlelit Advent Carol Service
6.30 pm

8th Dec. Christingle, 4.00 pm

15th Dec. YPF Christmas presentation and Sunday Club Nativity play,
10.00 am

22nd Dec. Service of Nine Lessons and Carols by candlelight, 6.30 pm

Christmas Eve: Crib Service, 4.00 pm

Midnight Communion 11.30 pm

With carols from 11.10 pm

Christmas Day: Christmas Communion 9.00 am

All Together Christmas Worship
10.30 am.

BURNS NIGHT

Save the date 25th January for our popular Burns night supper in the Church Centre. You can look forward to a hearty supper, at tot of whiskey, traditional readings, a table quiz and some Scottish-themed entertainment! More details of this festive evening in the new year!

ROYAL SCHOOL OF CHURCH MUSIC

We are very pleased to report that Andrew Reid - well known to many in the parish and, of course, a former member of our church choir - has been appointed an Honorary Fellow of the RSCM. This distinction is awarded for achievements in church music and/or liturgy of international significance, or for exceptional musical and/or liturgical work within the RSCM. This would refer to Andrew's time as Director of the RSCM (2012-2017).

We send our best wishes and congratulations to Andrew, and share our pride in his achievement with Susan and David Reid.



"It's easy to tell when it's Nativity Play time - I can never find a tea-towel!"

FAITH IN THE FAMILY...

December: Countdown to Christmas

At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of God's son Jesus, the baby who was laid in the manger because there was no room at the inn in Bethlehem. The name Jesus means "God saves!" He came to heal our broken relationship with God; to show us how to live loving God and one another; and eventually to die on the Cross, so that anyone who is truly sorry will be forgiven and can be friends with God for ever.

At this time of year, it is very easy to be drawn into all the busyness and to lose track of the true joy of Christmas. Here are a few ideas for a meaningful countdown to Christmas.

Advent candles

In the Church, Advent starts four Sundays before Christmas Day.

At St Bart's, a new purple candle is lit each week with a white one for

Christmas Day. Most

children love candles. Capture a sense of anticipation at home by lighting an Advent candle each evening. Alternatively, buy five large coloured candles and light cumulatively, an extra one each week. For example, green for hope, blue for peace, yellow for joy, red for love and (for 25th) white for Jesus the Light of the World. Chat in simple terms about the way in which Jesus can bring us hope (things will be better), peace (he helps us to get on with others), joy (he helps us be happy whatever is going on), love (God loves us so much he sent us Jesus), light (why we need it). Such conversations can grow in depth over the years.



Advent calendars

Buy a calendar depicting the Christmas story. Make a special time each day to open the next door and chat about how the person, animal or item fits into the Christmas story. The Real Advent Calendar from Traidcraft comes with a Christmas story activity book.



Christmas cooking

There are lots of Biblical recipes online! Have fun making chocolate crispy cake mangers with a marzipan baby placed inside (see Naturally Good Food).

While children are busy, put together a fish pie (or label a ready-made meal) to freeze ahead for Christmas Eve so that you have time to come as a family to the Crib Service at 4pm when children help to put the Crib together.



Christmas watchfulness!

As you enjoy festive High Streets, be on the lookout for decorations or shop windows that display something from the Christmas story (angels, stars, crowns, etc) Make the link ("The Angel Gabriel brought Mary the message that she was going to have a baby", "The wise men are sometimes called the Three Kings and Jesus is a King", etc).



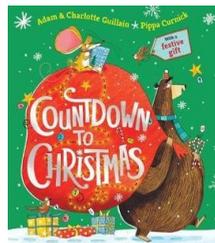
Carol Singing

Take turns to choose a favourite carol for all the family to sing. Think about the words and what you like about them. Teenagers might arrange to go carol singing for charity. Take a break from shopping and come along to Carols and Cake on Sat 14th Dec at 2.30pm in the Church Centre!



Nativity Scene

Hide one piece/figure from a nativity set around the house every day to be found and completed on Christmas Eve or to place beneath a tree. Be creative and make your own scene using lego, dolls and soft toys suitably attired! For an amusing and rhyming picture book on this theme, see *Countdown to Christmas* by Adam and Charlotte Guillain (Egmont).



Vicki Howie





NEWS FROM OTFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Visit to the Methodist Church



On Thursday 17th October, Year 6 went on a trip to the Methodist Church in Otford. Reverend Ritson shared his

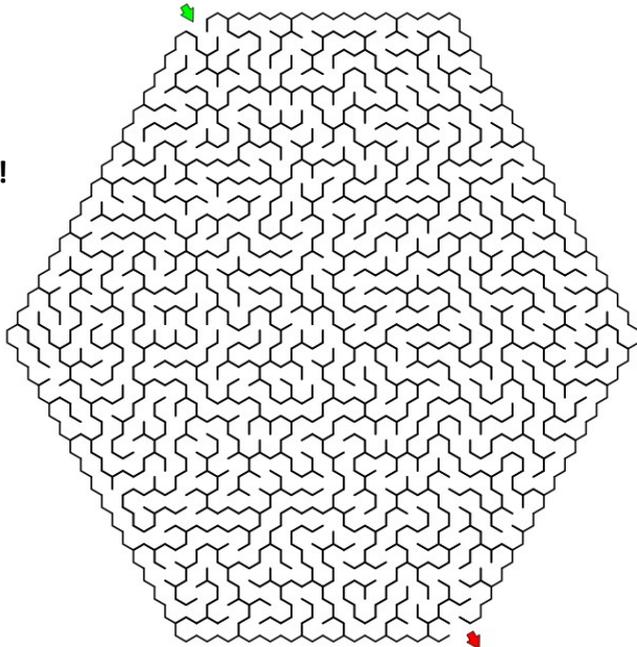
experience of life in the army, showed us some pictures of his times there and answered our questions on the issue "Is it ever right to do wrong?" He talked about what Christians think about this subject as well as how his faith supported him and others during his time in the army. He also talked to us about refugees who were forced to leave their homes and

belongings in their war-torn countries to find a better life and explained that he had to help provide for their basic needs and necessities. We learnt a lot and had many of our questions answered.

Cleo, Year 6



Find your Way!



HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY, EUNICE

Celebrating a century!

On 2 November St. Bartholomew's Church Centre was the setting for the joyful celebration of the 100th birthday of Eunice, a long-time member of the congregation. The hall was festooned with balloons, flowers, fairy lights, and photographs of Eunice from childhood to present day, as friends and family joined in raising a toast.

Eunice and her beloved husband Jim moved to Otford thirty-six years ago, on his retirement as headmaster of Ockley primary school in Surrey. They immediately threw themselves into church and village life in Otford. Their activities included folkdance, walking groups, managing the village hall, running stalls at the summer fete, and driving for the lunch club. They loved their life and home in Otford, and celebrated their golden, diamond, and platinum weddings here, achieving seventy-two happy years of marriage.

The world has changed incalculably since Eunice was born. In 1919 King George V was on the throne. The 'War to end all Wars' had ended the previous year. Spanish influenza was rife across the world. It was before the time of radio, few houses had electricity or indoor plumbing. Eunice's father, a returned serviceman, was recovering from the effects of war.

A few days ago Eunice said, 'I've had a good life. I've done so many interesting things.' But how does a person get to 100? Perhaps being born with a sunny nature helps. Eunice has also been fortunate in staying fit, marrying well, having a loving family, and maintaining

and nourishing friendships. She has enjoyed and embodied faith, hope and love in her life. These qualities sustained her during anxious times of World War II, when she was a young mother and Jim was away at sea for long periods.

Eunice is forever positive, perhaps reflecting the wartime spirit in 'just getting on with life'. She enjoys remarkable health and a youthful enthusiasm. She is very much at home at St. Bartholomew's, so it was an excellent venue for her party. Eunice and her family wish to express their thanks to the church team, in particular Susan and Clive, for facilitating this happy occasion.

Ruth Beasley



Eunice at her 100th birthday party

IN CONVERSATION WITH ... CHRIS BISHOP

A member of St Bart's choir for over thirty years

Born in Hampstead in 1938, Chris lived in Mill Hill until he left school. His father joined the army at the start of WW2 and served with distinction in the Royal Tank Regiment at El Alamein and in Italy, France and Germany. Once demobbed, he had to pick up his civilian career and get to know his son – by then seven years old. Chris still treasures the letters his father regularly wrote to him whilst he was away.

Chris' sister Felicity was born in 1946 and he started at Haberdashers' Aske Prep School (then in Mill Hill) soon afterwards. Later he moved to the senior school in Hampstead.

When Chris was twelve he joined Mill Hill Crusaders and, in addition to Sunday class and games evenings, enjoyed the summer camps in Devon and Cornwall. Often 150 children would attend the Sunday class and Chris said that he found it, 'great fun, not boring like church'! At one of the summer camps, when he was about fifteen, Chris felt challenged to become a Christian, and developed his faith by attending church and Billy Graham's meetings in Haringey with his parents. Chris described the 'amazing atmosphere' at the meetings.

In 1955 the Bishops moved to Bromley when the family printing business, which had been founded by Chris' grandfather in 1924, re-located from the City of London to St Mary Cray. Aged seventeen Chris took his A levels that year, saying that his school career was not 'academically distinguished'. He told me that, earlier on, he had discovered that he could avoid Latin by joining the school choir and he thinks that's where the seed of his love of choral singing was planted. He enjoyed all sports and

represented the school at rugby, cricket, tennis, shooting and athletics.

In the sixth form Chris was heading towards a career in the field of industrial chemistry but, at the last minute, chose to follow his grandfather, father and uncle into the printing industry. He completed a three year full time course in printing technology and management at the London School of Printing and Graphic Arts and, on leaving, was offered a job in the Financial Times City Print Division. After about three years Chris joined the family business, eventually taking over as Chairman and Managing Director. He told me that the business connections of his family and client base led to him being elected a Freeman of the City, an honour which he felt reflected their contribution to printed communication over many years.

In 1958 Chris' father, also a talented singer, persuaded him to join the church choir in Keston where they were then living. Initially somewhat reluctant, Chris changed his mind when he saw the attractive teenage girls and, five years later, fell in love with Joy, the daughter of one of the



organists. They married in 1964 and lived in a tiny house in Orpington. By 1972 they had two children, Philip and Helen, so bought a bigger home in Bromley where they began going to St Mary's Church, Shortlands. Gemma arrived in 1979 but their happiness was shattered two years later when Joy was diagnosed with breast cancer. She fought bravely through five years of treatment but died in 1986.

On his own with three children, Chris said he was greatly supported by their church family and many friends but that his life had a huge void so one evening he called on a neighbour and friend, who was a singing teacher and a member of the URC church in Bromley, to say he would like to start singing again. She introduced him to the South London Singers and he passed the audition.



He began making new friends and over a half-time coffee break, started chatting to one of the altos. Betty and Chris have now been very happily married for 32 years!

Chris also gained two more children, Nicola and David, who fitted between Helen and Gemma age-wise. He said the children immediately joined forces against 'the parents' and became a happy and united family. Their new family home was in Sevenoaks; Betty was teaching at Walthamstow Hall. After they married, Chris and Betty tried various churches in Sevenoaks before coming to St Bart's where there was a fine choir and where David Towne immediately made them feel welcome.

Approaching retirement, Chris merged his firm with another substantial printing company to form Cantate, a leading printer to the arts in London, and so named because both Chris and the chairman of the other company felt that Psalm 96 – Cantate Domino – O sing unto the Lord a new song – would inspire not only the name of the new company but also its philosophy.

Chris said that his life is now filled with gardening, golf, singing in three choirs, church, keeping fit and enjoying his family comprising his wife, five children (all married) and twelve grandchildren.

He concluded that he feels very blessed and that he wakes up every morning giving thanks for another day because life is so good.

Christeen Malan



DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS

The Festive Season

The Festive Season is fast approaching and your District Council is busy planning for the Christmas and New Year period.

To help you through this busy time, your Council provides additional services over the festive season, and ways to save you money too. Read on to find out more about these as well as other useful information of which you may not be aware.

Christmas Markets Did you know we have three local markets in Sevenoaks offering excellent value and local produce as well as festive gifts for family and friends?

Blighs Christmas market: Every Saturday before Christmas and every day from 16th to 24th December - 9am to 4pm.

High Street Saturday market: Every Saturday from 9am to 4pm before Christmas plus an extra day on Monday 23rd December.

Buckhurst Wednesday market: Open as usual every Wednesday before Christmas.

Free Parking In the run up to Christmas, parking will be free over the last two weekends before Christmas in Sevenoaks and Westerham. Car parks and on-street parking will be free on Saturday 14th and 21st December, and free in Blighs car park too on Sunday 15th and 22nd December.

Recycling and Refuse Collection Christmas generates more waste than any other time of the year. The good news is you can recycle much of this using the Council's clear sacks which are delivered free to every household. Council staff will be working extra days over the holiday

season so that you do not miss out on a refuse collection. Most collections will take place a day later or on the same day as your regular collection day. Collections which fall on 23rd will take place on 21st and one day earlier for collections on 24th or 25th December.

Tree-cycle At the end of the festive season the Council will collect and recycle your 'real' Christmas trees (diameter no bigger than 90mm/3.5") for free. All you need to do is put your tree on the boundary of your property, so it is visible from the road, by 7am on the day of the fortnightly Garden Waste Collection from Thursday 2nd January until Friday 31st January 2020. All the trees the Council collects are turned into environmentally friendly compost, and for this reason, the Council cannot take trees which are decorated or in pots or stands. If you are unsure of when the service is visiting your road, go to www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/collectiondays or call 01732 227000.

For many of the Council's frontline and emergency services that we all rely upon it will be business as usual over Christmas and the New Year period to ensure that you have a smooth, safe and enjoyable festive season.

Wishing you and your families a very merry Christmas and good health and happiness for the New Year.

*Cllr Irene Roy
cllr.roy@sevenoaks.gov.uk
Tel: 01959 525610*



OUT AND ABOUT



Girlguiding Otford's Christmas Post 2019

Stamps for Girlguiding Otford's Christmas Post

Service go on sale on 28th November 2018 for the 37th year running and will be available until Friday 20th December.

The special charity post service, which is one of the longest running in the country, delivers Christmas cards with the scheme's special stamps to addresses in Otford village. Stamps cost 30p and are available to purchase in Otford library during normal opening hours or in the Parish Council office every weekday morning. Christmas cards can be posted in the special post boxes located in the same places. Otford's Brownies and Guides will collect, sort, frank and then deliver the cards over the two weekends before Christmas.

This year the money raised from the sale of the stamps will be donated to SERV Kent Bloodrunners, a charity that provides emergency courier services transporting blood products, samples and other essential items for major hospitals and hospices in Kent out of normal working hours.

Please support them by purchasing the special stamps and posting your cards early. Thank you.

Library opening hours – Monday 9am – 1pm, Tuesday 9am – 1pm, 2pm- 5pm, Wednesday Closed, Thursday 9am – 1pm, Friday 1pm – 5pm, Saturday 10am – 2pm

Parish Council opening hours – Monday to Friday 8am – 12:30pm



Kemsing Singers "Deck the Hall "

This year the Kemsing Singers are performing a joyful caper through an Elizabethan Christmas with well known Carols and other Christmas music. Also performing will be The Wealden Recorder Consort. Make a note of the dates which are Friday 13th and Sat 14th December at 7.30 at St Edith Hall, Kemsing.

Tickets £10 (U 18 £5) from 01959 523752 or any choir member.



CHANGE OF VENUE FOR OTFORD EVENING W.I. MEETING ON 12th OF DECEMBER:

Due to the Election we cannot use the Club Room for our meeting on Thursday the 12th of December, so we will meet next door at the CHURCH HALL at 7.00 for 7.30 pm.

Mandy Winters will entertain us about her life in Show Business and we will celebrate with a light buffet.

For any further information, please contact 01959 522485



Otford Primary School's Christmas Bazaar is on Saturday 7th December, 12 - 3 pm.

Please come and support this fun family event. Including Winter Wonderland Santa's Grotto, Christmas Market, Tombola, Face Painting, Games, Raffle, Refreshments and much more! Entry: Adult £1, Children Free. Everyone Welcome.

If anyone would like to book a stall or request more information please contact ptfa@otford.kent.sch.uk

OTFORD HERITAGE TRAIL - THE DARENT CROSSING AND BROUGHTON MANOR

Standing here in 1016 you may have been crushed by retreating Vikings desperate to escape the mounted soldiers of Edmund Ironside. Yet 600 years later, the stench coming from the tanners' yard up the street may also well have moved you on. Meanwhile, the impressive brick-built gateway that stand nearby, hide the serenity of Otford's beautiful Tudor home, Broughton Manor.

THE SECOND BATTLE OF OTFORD



King Edmund Ironside in pursuit of the Danish warlord Canute and his fleeing army in 1016.

In 1016, Canute and the whole Danish invasion force was descending Polhill, to your left. They had marched from London having tried on two occasions to scale the city's impregnable walls. His dispirited army was encumbered by booty, cattle and captives. Behind them, on the hill's crest, there arrived Edmund Ironside, the new king of England. With his English army gathered from Wessex, he rode down on the retreating Danes.

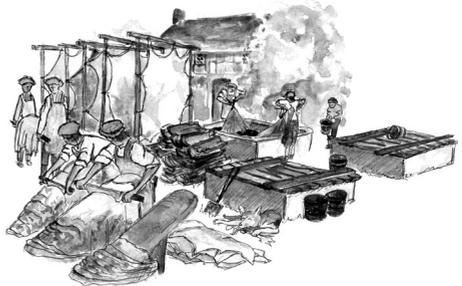


Using his shield-wall to slow the attackers, Canute fought a rear-guard action here at the

long-ford over the Darent. Although many of his men escaped to their ships at Sheppey, it was a battle lost for Canute, and our ford 'ran red with Danish blood'.

This crossing of the river at Otford continued as a ford until the first bridge was built at some unknown date in the Middle Ages. Serious flooding occurred in September 1968 and swept the bridge away. A temporary Bailey bridge was erected by the Royal Engineers and it remained here for the next four years! Even today the bridge is still often fondly referred to as the 'Iron Bridge'.

THE GREYNES TANNERY



Tanning in the 17th century was a very smelly business.

In the 1650s the chief industrial enterprise of the village was its tannery, operated by Thomas Smithers. The adjacent timber-framed house in which he lived was called Greynes.

To transform the hairy hide of a cow, horse or pig into soft pliable leather required a series of smelly processes. Having been soaked in a vat of urine to loosen the hairs, the tanning process required immersion into another vat containing water, oak bark (tannin), dog excrement, pigeon droppings, and animal

brains! The tannery was understandably sited at the very edge of the village.

In 1659 William Hartnupp bought the business with its 'barns, tanyard, lodges, vats, cisterns and tanning vessels'. By 1844, however, the centuries old tannery at Tanners Mead had ceased production. The house was demolished and The Grange built upon the site.

In 1851, the Reverend R.B. Tritton, the parson of Otford, bought the house and The Grange remained the village parsonage until the end of the First World War. The long boundary wall beside Pickmoss Lane dates back to the days of that early 17th century tannery.

BROUGHTON MANOR

The first home was built about 1290 as a simple hall house beside the Darent. It faced up-river in those days and was known as Broctons after its owner, Thomas de Broctone.

Over the centuries the old house passed through many owners – even at one point King Henry VIII who willed it to his daughter, Princess Mary. She sold it in 1554 to David Polley, the first known ancestor of the Polhills. The Polley family lived here for the next three



Thomas Polhill and his wife Elizabeth Ireton, the granddaughter of Oliver Cromwell.

centuries. It was another David Polley who, in 1600, built out from the rear of the old hall a 'traditional' Tudor manor house, most of which we see today.

Thomas Polhill, having married Oliver Cromwell's grand- daughter, Elizabeth Ireton, established the Polhills as significant local landowners (until 1830), as the many family hatchments and monuments in Otford church bear witness.



*With thanks to
Rod Shelton, Phil Clucas
and Ed Thompson*



CHURCH PILGRIMAGE TO ITALY

Memories of Rome

It was a very early and wet start for the twenty-seven pilgrims (from St Bart's and other local churches) as we took a coach at 6.15 am on 21st October, 2019 to Gatwick Airport for our 9.15 am flight to Rome. On our arrival at Rome Airport we met our guide Raffaella and travelled by coach into the centre of Rome to our Guesthouse/ Monastery, which was in the old centre, for our four- night stay. We walked to the Pantheon and then had a lovely meal in a local restaurant before having an early night.

Our first full day, spent in brilliant sunshine, was spent touring Ancient Rome. We started at the Colliseum, built by 15,000 slaves in just 8 years. We then walked to the Forum and on to the Anglican Centre for Eucharist and lunch. It was a wonderful time of worship with friends from around the world. We then visited the church of St. Clements where we saw three layers of buildings going back to the first century; a further walk to the first ever Baptistry and finally a tour of St. John Lateran, the Cathedral of Rome. As the authorities have banned coaches from the centre of Rome, we walked all day. According to Dawn's gadget, we clocked over 20,000 steps and covered over 8 miles. This was a day for the group to bond to the point where one member asked, 'Please could you do me a favour and scratch my shoulder?' and was met with, 'Of course I will!' The day finished with another meal in a local restaurant.

Our third day began with our usual walk to our coach, in glorious sunshine, and a journey to the Catacombs of Domitilla, owned by the

Vatican. We walked underground to see just a few of the holes in the soft rock which once contained the bodies of thousands of the dead of Ancient Rome. There were seven miles of passages over four levels, the lower ones being the most recent, which were eventually full by the fifth century. All the catacombs were outside the city walls as burial was forbidden within them. When our tour was complete, we celebrated Eucharist in a chapel inside the Catacombs, with Andrew Proctor leading our worship, a wonderful experience for us all. We then drove along the Appian Way, past the Church of Quo Vadis, before arriving at

the ***Basilica of St. Paul's outside the Walls***. We had lunch in their Refectory, which included the most enormous ice creams, the first of



many during the pilgrimage. Diet, what diet! We then had a guided tour of the Church, which holds the body of the martyr St. Paul, behind the high altar, together with the chains with which he was shackled as he was led to his execution. As Paul was a Roman Citizen he was beheaded, not crucified. We also saw some excavations of former dwellings on the site, before returning to the hotel for a rest. Our evening was a walk past the Trevi



meant that he and the rest of the group were easy to find! We then went through the Cistine Chapel, which was amazingly beautiful. Our tour continued around **St. Peter's Basilica**, the largest cathedral in the world, with our own St. Paul's cathedral coming second. St. Peter's holds the body of St. Peter, who was martyred in Rome and was crucified for his faith. He was crucified upside down as he did not feel able to be crucified in the same way as Jesus. We then walked around St. Peter's Square before having lunch in the old quarter and an ice cream. We then had a free afternoon for some retail therapy before our final dinner together in Rome.

Fountain and a meal together in a restaurant.

Day four was our last in Rome, again in glorious sunshine, with a trip to the Vatican City, but not before we had sung Happy Birthday to Raffaella. We had a Vatican Guide to take us around the museum, which was extremely busy, but luckily one of our group was wearing a bright green polo shirt, which

We asked our guide Raffaella what was the most memorable comment she had ever had from any of the people she had been with on tour. Her reply was an American Lady who said, 'Gee you Romans do like building ruins!'

*To be continued
Brenda Edwards*



WITH LOVE FROM GOD TO YOU

See the big picture of God's rescue plan

The exciting thing about having an author's website is that you never know who might get in touch with an interesting project or writing request.

In May, the Bible Society emailed me to ask if I would like to work with them to produce their children's Christmas picture book for 2019 and an accompanying "no-rehearse" nativity play for churches to download. The story would also be made into a short animation. The bad news was that the deadline was in two weeks' time!

I have always admired the work of the Bible Society – not only in providing Bibles to people in over 200 countries in their own languages, but also in the work they do in the UK to help adults and children recognise the value of the Bible against a backdrop of indifference. So I said "Yes!"

I was given a wide brief. I could start the story wherever I liked, as long as the Nativity was at the heart. The only restrictions were the word count of 1,200 and the necessity to stay close to the Biblical account. With time limited, I had to go with my first idea which was to start right back at the beginning, showing how people chose to go their own way, the consequences, and how God sent Jesus to put his rescue plan into place – he was a world-saver, sent *With Love from God to You!*

All children's stories have a child or an animal as the main character and so I decided to make Planet Earth into a childlike character to lead a young reader through the story.

Four drafts (and mountains of Bible Society comments in red) later, the manuscript was finally approved. I enjoyed writing the art-brief for Hullo Creative, the illustrators, the main aim being to ensure that they chose the rights "moments" in each double-page spread to illustrate.

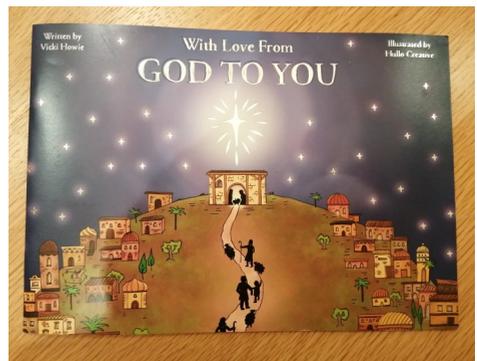
The booklets are now available and I am pleased with the art-work, the sparkly cover and the dyslexia-friendly font. It's exciting that the Entertainer Toy Shop, who have taken over the Early Learning Centre, will be including them in their nativity window scenes in all their shops this Christmas.

Even *more* exciting, the Sunday Club will be presenting the play on **Sunday 15th December at the 10am service**. Do come along and support all the young people's presentations that day and get ready to participate in some simple "all-join-ins" for the congregation!

Vicki Howie

www.vickihowie.co.uk

www.biblesociety.org.uk/withlove



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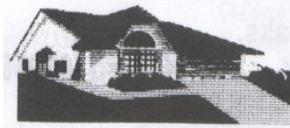


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