

St Bartholomew's Church

Otford Parish News



January 2019

www.stbartholomews.co.uk

£1

SERVICES AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

January	8am	10am	3pm	6.30pm
6 Jan Epiphany	Holy Communion	All Together Worship	-	Evensong
13 Jan Baptism of Christ	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	-	-
20 Jan 3rd Sunday of Epiphany	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	-	Joint Service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
27 Jan 4th Sunday of Epiphany	Holy Communion (BCP)	Holy Communion	Messy Church	-

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. 01 Volume 89

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



I hope you had a good Christmas and enjoyed unwrapping all your presents. As the New Year now unfolds, we are getting back into the regular flow of our daily lives. Hopefully, we are finding that some of the presents we have received we can already put to good use: perhaps a new jumper to keep us warm, a new tool to help us with DIY jobs, a new casserole dish to use next time we entertain friends to a meal...

It might seem obvious, but in order to enjoy these new presents to the full we have had to do two things: the first is to unwrap them to discover what we have been given; the second is actually to use them, rather than put them in the loft with the Christmas decorations and then forget about them.

What is true of our presents is also true of our faith. In this sense we need to continue to unwrap Christmas. I can illustrate this with the presents that were given to Jesus by the three Wise Men. At first sight the presents seem very impractical, and not at all useful for a new baby; and yet they were in fact very appropriate. They just needed to be unwrapped in a different way. They didn't reveal their true significance all at once. Mary recognised this, and her response was to ponder these things in her heart.

In this, Mary sets an example for all of us to follow. I find it very significant that Mary, one of the key people in the whole Christmas story, didn't comprehend it all at once. There were many aspects that she did not understand. There was much whose true meaning would only be revealed with the unfolding of the years. She would need to continue to unwrap the significance of the gold, frankincense and myrrh throughout her life, revealing the full identity of her son and the true meaning of his life's work. Indeed, it was only with the death and resurrection of Jesus that the full picture would become clear.

What is true for Mary is also true for us. At Christmas we have celebrated the gift of God's Son to the world and to us. Now we have to unwrap this gift and discover what difference it makes in our everyday lives. Like Mary, we can do this by pondering the Gospel message in our heart.

The outcome will be different for each of us as we unwrap God's gift to us and apply our faith in our own personal circumstances. Like Mary, we are all called to search for God's truth, and in so doing to find fullness of life. We are still on the way. Indeed, the early Christians were known as "the people of the Way."

As we are at the beginning of a New Year, on a personal level I would encourage each of us to ponder what areas of our faith we would like to grow in over the coming months. Where is our own search for God leading us? In what experiences or questions do we feel God touching our lives?

The months after Jesus' birth were full of upheaval for the Holy Family and they had to endure an uncertain political period before they were able to settle in Nazareth. We also face considerable uncertainty in our national life over the next few months. As the wise men helped Mary and Joseph understand what was unfolding in their lives, let us pray for wisdom for all those who will be making decisions on our behalf over the coming weeks and months.

Your friend and Vicar, *Richard*

DIARY FOR JANUARY 2019

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

- 2 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) refreshments afterwards
- 3 7.30 pm Worship Advisory Group (Vicarage)
- 6 **The Epiphany**
8.00 am Holy Communion
10.00 am All Together Worship
6.30 pm Evensong
- 7 7.45 pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)
- 9 9.30 am 'First Steps' (Otford Methodist Church Hall)
10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
8.00 pm Readers' and Revs' group (Riverside House, Shoreham)
- 10 **Magazine material for the February edition by today, please, to the Church Office,
st.bartholomews@otford.net**
11.00 am Magazine Editorial Team (Vicarage)
- 12 10.00 am Sunday Club Leaders' Meeting (Vicarage)
6.00 pm EPIC (Church Centre)
- 13 **The Baptism of Christ**
8.00 am Holy Communion
10.00 am Holy Communion
- 14 7.45 pm CAMEO (17 Leonard Avenue)
- 15 8.00 pm Fabric Committee (Church Centre)
- 16 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) (refreshments afterwards)
- 20 **The Third Sunday of Epiphany**
8.00 am Holy Communion
10.00 am Morning Worship
6.30 pm Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service (St. Bartholomew's)
- 21 12-2.00 pm Soup Lunch (Church Centre)
7.45 pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)
- 23 9.30 am 'First Steps' (Otford Methodist Church Hall)
10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
- 24 7.30 pm St. Bart's Men's Group with Jeremy Marshall (Church Centre)
- 27 **The Fourth Sunday of Epiphany**
8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

	10.00 am	Holy Communion
	3.00 pm	Messy Church (Church Centre)
28	7.45 pm	CAMEO (17 Leonard Avenue)
29	8.00 pm	Deanery Synod (Church Centre)
30	10.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP) refreshments afterwards



Registers



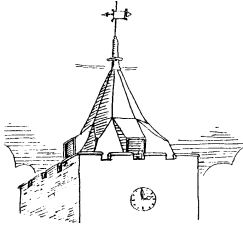
FUNERAL (Our Sympathy)

24th November	Iris Barbara Crane (aged 91)
25th November	Ronald Clifford Darby (aged 89)



"I must say, I can't wait to see our vicar bunji-jumping off the church tower with the bride and groom!"

FROM ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH



CHRISTMAS MARKET 'THANK YOU'

My sincere thanks to everyone who helped make the Christmas Market such a success. To the stallholders who worked so hard beforehand and on the day, to the kitchen staff who could show some high class places a thing or two, and to all who sewed, knitted, baked, made sweets and preserves, turned wood, filled hampers, sold raffle tickets - and to everyone who came to support us. What more could we ask? A lovely day, the Church Centre with stalls laden with goodies and delicious refreshments, and lots of people creating a truly joyous atmosphere. The total raised was £2,765 - amazing! Well done, everyone!

Sylvia Grafton

MESSY CHURCH

The next Messy Church event will take place on Sunday, 27th January at 3.00 pm. An enjoyable afternoon is promised for all who come. It is particularly suitable for families with children up to the age of 11.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will take place at St. Bartholomew's Church, Otford on Sunday, 20th January at 6.30 pm.

BIBLE READING NOTES

If you would like to order "New Daylight" Bible reading notes for next year, please see Margaret Lidbetter. For a group of 10 or more the annual subscription is £13.80 for 3 issues, May 17th, September 17th and January 2020.

A PILGRIMAGE TO ROME, ASSISI & RAVENNA

21st-29th October 2019

The Vicar, together with the Revd. Andrew Procter, will be leading a pilgrimage to Rome, Assisi and Ravenna from 21st - 29th October 2019. We will begin with 4 nights in Rome, focusing on Peter and Paul whose final days were lived here. We will then have two nights in Assisi, home of St. Francis, set amidst the tranquillity of the Umbrian countryside. We will finish in Ravenna, capital of the western Roman Empire in the 5th century and featuring some magnificent Byzantine mosaics. The cost of this 9-day pilgrimage is £1,895 and this includes flights, accommodation with breakfasts and suppers, and all travel with our own guide and all entrance fees. Brochures are available on the information stand in the main entrance to the church.

DATES FOR 2019

Sunday 20th January	Service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (6.30 pm, St. Barts)
Saturday 9th February	Wedding Preparation Morning (Church Centre, 10 am)
Friday 1st March	Women's World Day of Prayer (2pm, Otford Catholic Church)
Wednesday 6th March	Ash Wednesday (8pm, joint service at Otford Methodist Church)
Tuesday 12th March	5-session Tuesday evening Lent course begins (8 pm, Church Centre)
Sunday 31st March	Mothering Sunday (British Summer Time begins)
Saturday 13th April	Spring Cleaning of the Church (from 9 am)
Sunday 14th April	Palm Sunday Procession (10.45 am) and Service on The Green (11 am)
Thursday 18th April	Re-enactment of Last Supper (8pm) and The Watch (9pm)
Friday 19th April	Good Friday services
Sunday 21st April	Easter Day Services
Sunday 5th May	Commemoration of Departed Loved Ones (3 pm)
Saturday 12th May	Christian Aid Week begins
Sunday 19th May	Civic Service (10 am)
Monday 27th May	Village Fete / Bank Holiday
Thursday 30th May	Ascension Day
Sunday 9th June	Pentecost / Whitsunday services
Saturday 15th June	St. Bartholomew's Church Fair
Sunday 16th June	Trinity Sunday
Sunday 7th July	Sunday Club Celebration (10) & Parish BBQ in Vicarage Garden (12.30)
12th - 14th July	Youth Weekend at Kench Hill
Saturday 14th September	Friends of Kent Churches Ride and Stride
Sunday 15th September	Stewardship Sunday
Sunday 29th September	Harvest Services
Sunday 27th October	Bible Sunday
Sunday 10th November	Remembrance Sunday Service (10 am in Church, 10.50 am on The Green)
Saturday 23rd November	Christmas Market (10 am)
Sunday 1st December	Advent Carol Service (6.30 pm)
Sunday 8th December	Christingle (4 pm)
Sunday 15th December	Nativity Play and Christmas Presentation (10 am) Choir Christmas Concert (7 pm)
Sunday 22nd December	Nine Lessons and Carols (6.30 pm)
24th December	Crib Service (4 pm) Midnight Communion Service (11.30 pm)
25th December	Christmas Communion (9 am) All Together Christmas Worship (10.30 am)

FAITH IN THE FAMILY...

January: Light bulb moments!

Bible story: On the road to Damascus

Saul knew that he was right.



As his mule carried him along the sandy road to Damascus, the Temple guards following him on foot, he leant over and patted his saddlebag with satisfaction. Safe inside were the letters from the High Priest

authorizing him to go to the synagogues and arrest those fools, those silly “People of the Way”, who still insisted that Jesus had been the Son of God. What wickedness! He shook his head. Some of them were even saying they’d seen Jesus after his death – that he’d come back to life!

Of course he was right to hunt down those people. He’d done it in Jerusalem, paying witnesses to say things to get them arrested. Well, they risked causing riots and then the Romans would take action. Violence on the streets of the city! But now these people had gone underground in other parts of the country.

Saul’s mule stumbled on a large rock, jolting him. A picture of that disciple, Stephen, flashed into his mind, lying under a heap of stones. He’d deserved to die, of course he had. But it was never pleasant to watch a stoning – and those followers of Jesus seemed emboldened whenever they were in danger. Stephen’s face had even shone with a sort of heavenly . . .

“There’s Damascus, sir!” One of the guards pointed down at a gleaming city spread out along the sand. Ah yes, all his life had been leading to this mission; his education, his

cleverness, his family’s pride in never breaking the laws of Moses. Keeping the law, that was what mattered.

Saul kicked his mule onwards, his eyes fixed on the dazzling rooftops below. White, and so bright they dazzled him. Brilliant. Searing. With no warning a light from heaven flashed around him. He was off his mule and down on the stony ground. He heard a voice say to him,



“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

“Who are you, Lord?” he asked. He already knew the answer.

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” replied the voice. “Now get up and go into the city and you will be told what you must do.”

The guards pulled him to his feet. He opened his eyes but saw nothing. Blinded. So they led him, shaking, down into Damascus. At the house of Judas on Straight Street, he asked to be left alone – refused all food and drink for three days. He saw nothing, just thought. Oh, all those People of the Way he’d helped to kill. Stephen – murdered for telling the truth. Such cruelty! When all he’d preached was love, healing, forgiveness . . . Could *he* ever be forgiven? No, impossible. Yet, as he began to pray he had a vision of a man . . .

He sensed the stranger, Ananias, enter the room – felt his trembling hands on his shoulder, his eyes.

“Brother Saul, the Lord - Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here – has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes and he recognized the man in his vision. He was asking him if he wanted to be baptized? Yes, yes! For now he saw clearly, understood the truth! He must regain his strength and then use his God-given talents to tell anyone who would listen about Jesus!

Parents' pause for thought: Everyone's faith journey develops in a different way and does not need to be dramatic to be valid. Saul was a contemporary of Jesus and he may have been wrestling with Christian ideas for some time before his conversion.

Think about your own journey and be prepared to share your story with the children in your life. What helped to convince you? Our children may not seem to take much notice of what we say, but we may be sowing seeds that will take root later.

The Bible story: Chat about the story of Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9: 1-19).

Have you ever thought that you were right about something and then discovered that you were completely wrong?

Do you ever try to tell yourself it's OK to do something wrong?

How do you feel about people who think differently to you?

Do you think there is a difference between having lots of knowledge (like Saul) and being wise?

How do you think Saul felt after he saw Jesus on the road to Damascus?

What do you think Saul did for the rest of his life?

Some revealing facts

Epiphany means a moment when you suddenly feel that you understand, or become conscious of, something very important to you.

The Feast of the Epiphany is celebrated on Twelfth Night and is associated with the visit of the magi to baby Jesus and also the baptism of Jesus. In both cases, Jesus was revealed as someone of particular importance.



In some European countries, children leave their shoes out the night before to be filled with gifts, while others leave straw for the king's horses.

In Ireland, **Epiphany** is sometimes called Women's Christmas, because the men do the housework and cooking and the women get the day off!

Twelfth Night is traditionally the date by which Christmas decorations should be taken down. Count how many cards received have the three kings on them! Cut cards along the fold and use the blank side for shopping lists, etc.

*As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright,
So, most gracious God, may we
Evermore be led to Thee.*

Vicki Howie

A BOOK WHICH INFLUENCED ME...

The Hiding Place by Corrie ten Boom

It was the first week of the Alpha Course: a 12 week introduction to the Christian faith delivered in the home of a churchgoer. At the end of that first evening the course leader spoke about some of the books which were available to take away and read. As a committed atheist, I was only there because my teenaged daughter had urged me to attend. I didn't want to waste my time reading a soppy Christian book, so I passed up the opportunity.

Each week, the leader would introduce a different book and encourage us to try one. By week four I was warming up to the idea that maybe Christianity might have something to it after all. I borrowed 'The Hiding Place' as it looked like a good story. Pretty soon I was gripped by it.

Corrie ten Boom grew up in Amsterdam in the early 20th century, the daughter of a jeweller and watchmaker. She writes movingly about her childhood, in which the Christian faith – particularly Bible reading – was central. As a young woman she became a watchmaker herself and helped her father in the family business.

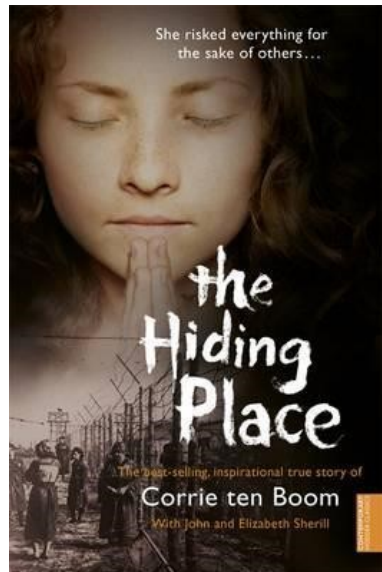
In 1940 the Nazis invaded Holland. In 1942 a Jewish woman came to the ten Boom's door and asked for sanctuary. Thus began a very successful endeavour to hide both Jews and Dutch resistance workers in the ten Boom's house. Many lives were saved. It came to an abrupt halt in February 1944 when an informer told the Gestapo about the house. Miraculously the hidden Jews survived, but Corrie and other

family members were sent to concentration camps. She writes poignantly about that experience, and how she came to rely on God's provision throughout.

This wonderful book had a big impact on me. I've read lots of Christian books since. But none has made such a big impression as The Hiding Place. I saw for the first time what the Christian life meant. How a deeply Christian upbringing can set someone up for a life of serving others. The importance of faithful prayer. What it means to trust God even in the darkest times when human hope is all but extinguished.

Who knows, you might enjoy it too. It's still in print!

Bill Lattimer



MISSION MATTERS ... SAYT

Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust (SAYT) kicked off to a great start in 2018 with the recommencement of detached work on Thursday nights, following the cancellation at the end of 2017, with Julie ably supported by the team of volunteers and trustees. 2017 had shown a slow reduction in numbers at Greatness following the regeneration and promotion of the football ground. The team's focus initially moved to Bat and Ball station with a short stint in Otford. By the end of the summer they had found the new home in Kemsing with the team regularly making contact with 15 - 20 young people during the autumn months. Evenings include the obligatory hot chocolate and cake, card games and most importantly taking time to talk, listen, share and help. Following a conversation through this detached work Julie is helping one young person prepare their first CV.

A new round of recruiting commenced early in the year to try and find a second youth worker. These culminated in March with three applications received and two rounds of interviews.

The schools work has gone from strength to strength throughout the year. A record number of assemblies have been performed at Knole Academy with pupils actively coming up to thank and engage the team afterwards. May saw the start of a Christian Union at Knole Academy with the team supporting the students who proposed the idea in addition to the existing Thursday lunchtime club and games club at Trinity.

September saw Bath Holgate start as the new youth worker alongside Julie. Beth has a huge

amount of experience in youth work. She has fitted straight in and has already build an amazing rapport with the young people. Beth is primarily focusing upon the schools work that SAYT performs. She has made good progress at re-strengthening the links with Sevenoaks School, and conversations have been started with Weald over options for providing support at the new Grammar School Annex adjacent to Trinity School.

As we begin the new year we ask for your prayers towards: -

- For Beth as she grows in confidence, and responsibilities and also plans for her wedding in April.
- That our regular presence would be engaging, loving and even inspiring, with effectiveness in sharing the love of Jesus with the detached group.
- For effective input with wellbeing, a major area of need for young people.
- Schools work, in particular for opportunities with the Weald Annex.

Russell Edwards



Youth workers Julie and Beth

IN CONVERSATION WITH DAWN HALLAM

... at the heart of our church family

Dawn leads a busy life, describing herself as a practical person who hates to be idle. As well as having a full-time job in the NHS, within St Bart's she is a Reader, organises Messy Church and EPIC, leads the YPF (with Claire Holmes and Russell Edwards) and helps with Sunday Club. She is also a trustee of the Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust and a prime mover behind Sevenoaks' Bountiful Women's Christian Conference (Trinity School, Saturday 23rd March 2019). In her spare time she enjoys travelling, summer walking, craftwork and cookery!

Dawn was born in Bournemouth and was adopted at six weeks. The family moved briefly to Gravesend and Westerham before settling in Dunton Green. She has a younger brother and told me that they had a fantastic childhood with brilliant holidays taken in the family caravan all over the UK. She particularly remembers two holidays to Scotland – one to the north coast when, whilst walking on the beach late at night, her father came under attack from seagulls, and another when, at her brother's insistence, they visited every castle in the country!



Dawn spoke highly of her secondary school, Bennett Memorial, saying that it provided just the right mix of pastoral care and academic stimulus. It was there that she first became a Christian. Although she grew up in a

churchgoing family and her father was a deacon in the Baptist Church, it was at Bennett (aged 17) that she was challenged by a friend to take Jesus into her heart as well as her head. She was then invited by another friend to come to a YPF bible study meeting in Otford. That group of young people, which included the Southgates and Bratbys, became hugely important in her Christian development and is a reason why she finds it 'really exciting' to work with our young people now.

A second step in her journey of faith was when, at 18, she became involved with Scripture Union's Sheringham Beach Mission going on to serve on the Sheringham team for a fortnight every summer for twenty eight years. Amongst her roles, she would regularly cook for sixty people! Dawn strongly believes that you grow as a Christian in serving others.

A further step in her journey was the decision to become a lay reader at St Bart's. She was under thirty when she volunteered and her offer was met with enthusiasm by the then vicar, Revd. David Towne who had earlier baptised her by full immersion in Eynsford Baptist Church. As a pre-requisite to becoming a reader Dawn also needed to be confirmed so she attended preparation classes which, I understand, she ended up running as much as quietly participating in!

Whilst in her mid-twenties Dawn became aware that God was calling her to serve abroad but she resisted. That year, at Spring Harvest, she attended a 'Big Tent' meeting and found the speaker had switched from someone talking about home mission to someone encouraging overseas mission. The result was that Dawn, now a qualified physiotherapist, went to Luampa in Zambia for a year to work in a

mission hospital. Luampa was two hours from the nearest tarmac road and she felt desperately homesick in the early weeks and months. There were no phones, electricity was supplied by a generator and there was a kerosene fridge. Dawn told me, 'you learn dependence on God' ... and she can still sing 'Read your bible and pray every day' in the local language, Lozi!

Dawn qualified as a physiotherapist at St Thomas's Hospital, London and first practised in Great Yarmouth for two years. From there she moved to Maidstone and, with the exception of her year in Zambia, has been employed in and around the area ever since. She has been a physiotherapist for the Royal British Legion and a therapy manager setting up day hospitals and community therapy services. She has also managed community hospitals and, for the last five years, has been the discharge manager for Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust. Whilst the work can be draining, especially in winter with the pressure on resources, Dawn

loves interacting with her team in finding solutions to difficult challenges to make a positive difference to people's lives.

Looking to the future Dawn would like to take early retirement and then perhaps work part-time in the clinical field. She has already travelled to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Bali, Sri Lanka and Canada and said that there are many more places she would like to explore. She would also enjoy having more time for her crafts which include knitting and some stunning cross-stitch.

One of Dawn's greatest joys is watching the young people of our church as they embark on their faith journeys and develop into wonderful Christian adults – she described her involvement in this youth work as 'a huge privilege'. She added that she is 'incredibly thankful for my church family'. We are fortunate indeed to have her as part of that family.

Christeen Malan





IN MEMORIAM



Ron Darby, 1929 - 2018

Ron was born on 31st August 1929 in Bromley, and together with his younger sister he spent his early childhood in Bromley. He was only 10 when the Second World War broke out. His family had to move houses several times due to their homes suffering bomb damage, with a consequent disruption to his schooling. He was also evacuated to several locations including Oxfordshire, Richmond, Sussex and Somerset where he was educated at Hove College, which had also been evacuated.

At the age of 17, Ron applied to the RAF, and he worked on the construction of air frames, learning the skill of welding. It was during his time in the RAF that Ron developed his love of jazz, being asked to play drums in the RAF band.

After 2 ½ years Ron was granted compassionate leave to help in his father's sheet metal business, but by the time he got home the company had gone bust. The family moved to Cheltenham where Ron worked with Smiths Instruments, making aircraft instruments.

Ron then moved to back to Petts Wood and worked at Orpington District Council. He devoted his free time to playing jazz with various bands. He then got a job with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (later BP).

In 1962 Ron was offered a full-time job in Monty Sunshine's Jazz Band, but he chose instead to work with British European Airways who offered him a job on the same day. It was while he was at BEA, working at the West London Air Terminal, that he met his wife , Barbara.

They got married in July 1963. At first they lived in Ron's flat in Earls Court. In 1966 they moved to West Wickham. Their daughter, Erica, was born later that year, and their family was complete with the birth of their son, Mike, in 1968.

Ron left BEA in 1968 and worked for a hotel booking agency in Victoria. This job did not involve shift work, and so Ron was able to join the Chez Chesterman Jazz Band on a regular basis.

In 1974 the family moved to Otford, and Ron and Barbara have lived there ever since. After a variety of different jobs, Ron worked in the entertainments section of Tonbridge Wells Borough Council. He also developed a skill in picture framing.

In addition to his jazz, Ron had a wide range of interests, including breeding Abyssinian cats, photography, family history and WW1, the Royal British Legion and the RNLI. Latterly he also took up kayaking with Tonbridge Canoe Club.

In later years Ron was blessed with two grandchildren in whom he took great delight.

Ron showed great courage in dealing with his declining health. He will be remembered with love and respect by all his family and friends.



DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS

I hope you had a restful and peaceful Christmas break and I wish you well for 2019.

In 2018 we remembered a number of very important centenaries including the ending of the First World War. It was lovely to see such a huge turnout in church on Remembrance Sunday as we remembered in particular the young men from Otford who gave their lives for others. Walking towards the war memorial and seeing the poppy ring of remembrance around the pond was very moving.

2018 was also the year of women. On 6th February 1918 The Representation of the People Act (granting women over 30 years old with small property qualification the right to vote in Parliamentary elections) received royal assent. Later that year, on 21st November, the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act passed, allowing women to be elected to Parliament and on 14th December 1918 women cast their votes for the first time in a General Election. Of course, as with so many other things, local government was ahead when it came to women's suffrage, allowing women to vote in council elections from 1869 and the first women councillors were elected in 1907.

To celebrate women winning the right to vote, the Otford and Kemsing Brownies joined me in the Sevenoaks District Council Chamber on 13th November to celebrate UK Parliament week. It was lovely to see the chamber so full of young girls debating issues that mean a lot to them, such as the overuse of plastics, animal testing and foreign aid. The girls had the opportunity to vote in real polling booths and place their ballot papers in actual ballot boxes to familiarise them with the democratic

process. But, most importantly, to open their eyes to the possibility of standing for election themselves.

As we celebrate 100 years of Parliamentary women's suffrage still only a third of the House of Commons is made up of women, and only a third of Sevenoaks District Councillors are women, down from nearly 50% in 2007. It's worth reflecting that since 1918 fewer than 500 women have taken up their seats in the House of Commons compared to more than 4,500 men. So sowing the seeds of a possible political career amongst young girls in important. The evening was made so worthwhile to me when one of the girls proclaimed at the end: 'I want to be a Member of Parliament more than anything else in the world' and I hope she makes it.

Sevenoaks District Council produced a video celebrating the achievement of women since 1918 that is on our You Tube channel. We interviewed a number of local, inspirational women currently in roles that would not have been possible a century ago. To see it visit Sevenoaks District Council's You Tube channel and, in the search bar at the top of the page, select the video called: 'Sevenoaks 100 years of women's vote'. Unfortunately you will spot a picture of me on the front! The message of the video is to follow your dreams.

With best wishes,

Michella



OUT AND ABOUT

OTFORD/NEUFCHATEL-HARDELLOT TWINNING ASSOCIATION



Our AGM will be held on Monday 21 January 2019 at 7.30pm at the Woodman Pub in Otford. Please note the change of date. All are welcome to hear our plans for 2019.

We are holding our annual Festive meal on Tuesday 2 February. Please contact Jane Lawrey via the Parish Council (clerk@otfordpc.co.uk) for further details.

EVENING WI



We start 2019 with a sparkling talk by Helen Kendall Tobias about Diamonds!

The date is Thursday, January 10th at 7.30 in the Club Room. Subscriptions are also due in January. For more information our President can be contacted on 01959 524831.

AULD LANG SYNE - REMEMBERING "THENADAYS"

'Auld Lang Syne' was sung over the New Year, especially in Scotland. It should, we are told, 'never be forgotten'. But what is it?

The words actually mean something like 'long time ago' and it is the 'acquaintances 'of long ago that we should not forget. In other words, and somewhat to contradict the usual New Year greetings, it calls us to look back. The past, it says, is precious, as are the people who have been part of it for us.

At my age people often use the word 'nowadays'. Usually negatively – 'nowadays there's nothing good on the TV' or 'nowadays people never say thank you'. It's a mind-set that is shaped by the memory of a golden age that probably never existed. Yet there is a truth in there somewhere. If we find 'nowadays' unsettling, why not remember 'Thenadays'? Our past is who we are. Its people have shaped our lives. There is nothing wrong sometimes in looking back and remembering. As the song says, it

should be 'brought to mind' – the 'old acquaintances' of our lives.

For me, for instance, that is my father taking me as a six-year-old to watch the steam trains go by. It's my grandparents in their Welsh village. It's old friends and colleagues, some from as long as 70 years ago, with all the laughter and tears we shared. And it's not just happy things like my own family but also the sad loss of loved ones and the feeling of helpless deprivation that follows. All of this is part of my 'Thenadays'.

As we wish people a 'Happy New Year' it's not a bad idea to pick up that strange Scots saying and invite them not to forget a human heritage which is ours – people, events, experience. 'Auld Lang Syne' is the totality of our lives as we have lived them. Looking back is often the best way of looking forward...

David Winter

RECIPE FOR JANUARY

I love Scotch eggs but the supermarket ones tend not to be crisp, and the sausage meat used is sometimes not very appetising. Homemade ones are very quick and easy to prepare and cook if you have a deep fat fryer.

1lb sausages or sausage meat
4 eggs (plus one extra beaten egg)
Breadcrumbs (ideally Panko breadcrumbs or gluten free ones, which are now available in the supermarkets, rather than the dyed orange ones)
Seasoned flour.

Put the eggs into a saucepan of cold water, bring to the boil, then take off the heat and leave to cool.

Preheat fryer to 180°

Peel the eggs and dip into seasoned flour.

Divide the sausage meat into 4, press flat and mould round the egg. (A cheat's way is to use two sausages per egg, roll one sausage round horizontally and one round vertically and press them together.)

Dip into beaten egg and then coat well with breadcrumbs. Deep fry for 6-8 minutes, depending on size of egg, and until well browned. They will be cooked through and very crisp.

Hilary Fothergill



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND TAKING ACTION

More than 33,000 social action projects – from food banks to debt counselling – are run or supported by churches, according to figures setting out for the first time the full scale of the Church of England’s service to communities.

The findings – which amount to the largest survey to date of the extent of the Church of England’s work with some of the most vulnerable in society – show that 80 per cent of congregations are involved in one or more forms of social action.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, says: “From food banks to debt counselling and lunch clubs to language classes, these figures spell out for the first time the sheer scale and range of our churches’ commitment to their communities.

“We are doing more to love and help people in need than at any time since 1945.

“We don’t just do this to be ‘nice’ but because our faith in Jesus Christ compels us to act.”

Data gathered from 13,000 churches shows

that the biggest area of work is in food banks – with 60 per cent, or nearly 8,000 churches – involved in either running or supporting food banks through volunteers, donations and providing venues.

Nearly a third, or 32 per cent, of Church of England churches run or support parent and toddler groups; just over a quarter, or 26 per cent, lunch clubs; and just over one in five, or 22 per cent, community cafes. Holiday clubs and breakfast clubs, often providing meals to children from low income families, are supported or run by nearly 17 per cent of churches.

Other community action projects supported or run by the Church of England’s churches involved a range of activities from bereavement support and community gardens to music events and English language tuition.

The figures on the extent of social action by Church of England churches were collected as part of the annual “Statistics for Mission” 2017 survey.

STUNNING NEW £2-MILLION BIBLE-AND-ART WEBSITE

If you want to enjoy art with your Bible reading, then visit the stunning new £2-million Bible-and-art website, ‘The Visual Commentary on the Bible’ (<https://thevcs.org/>) which was launched late last year.

‘The Visual Commentary on the Bible’ matches three works of art with passages of Scripture. Each triptych has been chosen by a theologian or an art historian (so far, there are 44 listed on the site), who also provides a short commentary on the picture, relating it to the Bible verses. The images on the site are high-

resolution, and with the powerful zoom facility, users can enjoy the artworks in great detail.

So far, there are 50 completed triptychs, or ‘exhibitions’, and another 50 await copyright permissions. In the next seven years, it is hoped that the number will grow to 1500.

The site is free to use. It is funded by Roberta and Howard Ahmanson, the US billionaire philanthropists, and draws on the expertise of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at King’s College, London.

JANUARY PICTURE PARABLE

The tale of the RICH FOOL

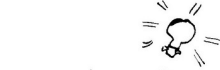


JESUS OFTEN TOLD
STORIES WITH
HIDDEN MEANINGS

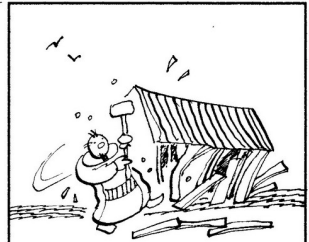


ONE STORY WAS ABOUT A MAN
WHO HAD LOTS OF LAND WHICH
GREW WONDERFUL WHEAT.

I HAVEN'T ANYWHERE TO
KEEP ALL THIS FOOD

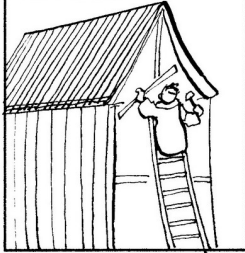


I KKNOW! I'LL PULL DOWN
MY BARN AND BUILD
BIGGER ONES



THE MAN DEMOLISHED HIS
OLD BARN...

...AND BEGAN TO BUILD
NEW ONES.



SOON I'LL BE THE RICHEST
MAN IN THE TOWN!



I'M SO LUCKY - I CAN
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BUT THAT VERY NIGHT,
THE MAN DIED!



WHAT GOD WERE HIS
RICHES NOW?



JESUS EXPLAINED - IT'S NOT
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GARDENING THROUGH THE YEAR WITH MEMBERS OF OTFORD GARDENERS' SOCIETY

Gardening in January? Not the best time of the year to get out and do things. And you can always find excuses not to get out into the garden. It's too cold. It's too wet. I can't find my gardening gloves! But this is the lazy gardener's way out. Just put on your old, worn and coveted thick gardening jacket, a woolly hat, a scarf, a pair of gardening gloves and rubber boots, although don't walk on the grass when the frost is still on the ground as this will damage your lawn.

The spring is normally regarded as the time to start gardening. However, in January some plants such as snowdrops and winter aconites begin to flower and others such as Christmas roses and winter jasmine will be in full flower.

As you look around your garden you will see some small, but important jobs that need doing, such as the renewal of supporting stakes for your shrubs and trees and there will always be the occasional weeds popping their heads up to remind you that they don't stop growing in the winter. Do your fences need attention? Do the supports to your climbing plants need repair? Incidentally, bare root shrubs, trees and roses can still be planted at this time, providing the soil is crumbly and not too wet or cold. If it has been snowing, shake the snow off the branches of any trees or shrubs to avoid them breaking. Renew the garden edging but be careful where you tread in your borders as those prize daffodils, which you planted last year and have forgotten about, may be beginning to poke their noses above the ground.

Or perhaps this is the time of the year for getting out those seed catalogues that you acquired in October, and have not opened yet, looking for those special garden plants that will enhance your garden and be the envy of your neighbours when

they bloom in full colour. You can indulge yourself in dreams of a perfect lawn, beautiful flowers and superb vegetables all coming to fruition at the right time.

And the best place to do this is in your sun lounge, sitting in your favourite armchair with your feet up, with the heat full on, looking out onto your garden with a large gin and tonic to keep you company!

A gardening tip for any time of the year, which comes from the television gardener, Bob Flowerdew - 'The best time to take cuttings is when no one is looking!'

Doug Dickerson

The Snowdrop

Deep in the earth through winter's cold.

Sun warms up. I stretch to the light, piercing earth's crust.

I open my heart – a tiny white bell within a canopy of petals.

Head hangs in humility but, happy to be here,

Echoing the joy of early spring.

Sheila Dickerson



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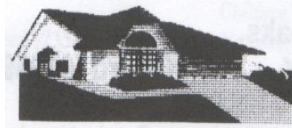
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The advertisement features a black and white photograph of a woman performing a Pilates exercise on a reformer machine in a studio. The text is overlaid on a dark banner at the top and bottom of the image.



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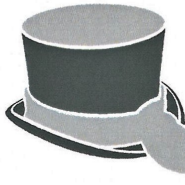
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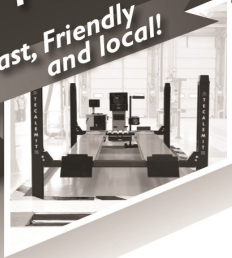


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