

Saints ALIVE

The magazine of:
All Saints, Leighton Buzzard
St. Nicholas, Hockliffe
St. Michael's, Eggington
St. Michael and All Angels,
Billington
The Good Shepherd, Sandhills

July & August 2024

70p



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The Apocrypha – discussed by Fr. Bernard Minton

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Bike 'n Hike 14th September; an Olympic Holiday Club ...

All Saints Leighton Buzzard

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In Vacancy

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Canon Grant Fellows 01525 381418

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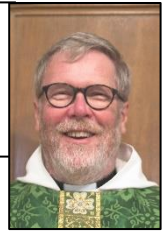
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***Greetings from Preb. David MacGeoch,
Looking forward to the family's arrival
at All Saints in August***



***John 10.10: "I have come that they might have life,
and that they might have it abundantly."***



As I write my first letter to you, my youngest son James, is celebrating his 18th birthday. I am reminded of the joy the day he was born and watching him grow and mature into a young man. Kathy and I are fortunate that we have had three children. Our eldest Elspeth is getting married to Louis just a week before we end our time at Glastonbury. It's very exciting as they begin a new life together and all that goes with that, and hopefully a long and prosperous marriage.

Our middle son Edward is looking forward with us to moving to Leighton Buzzard in mid-August. He has a place at university to study politics but is taking a year out to help his parents settle into their new house and surroundings! Kathy, a gardener has already planned out the vicarage garden several times over!

New beginnings should be exciting. I'm sure I'm not alone in saying that it can also be a little overwhelming alongside some apprehension. I want to thank you for saying "YES" and affirming what I have believed for several months to be a strong calling to come and serve you in the community of Leighton Buzzard. I have said to many people how exciting this new chapter in the MacGeoch life is going to be. Kathy and I would like to get to know you as quickly as possible, so we hope that you will join us at various coffee mornings including one at the vicarage within our first month. Thanks to the Churchwardens who are helping to set these up. I have to confess one of my weaknesses is to remember names so if I call you or Bob or Sheila, please don't be offended. The names will come in time.

There are three elements that make up a healthy and loving family. To eat, pray, and talk. I've already said that we hopefully will meet many people through coffee mornings. I would like to encourage you to join me for morning prayer, at 9am each morning from Tuesday to Friday. Come whenever you can manage.

Having a conversation with God and praying together is a great way to start the day. I am sure that we will have many Conversations as communication is really important, and yet it is so easy to misunderstand and feel not heard. I do hope that happens rarely.

John 10. 10 should read: "***we all come that we might have life, and that we might have it abundantly.***"

I hope you all have an enjoyable and refreshing summer and we look forward to becoming part of your community at the beginning of September.

God Bless, David

Our present pattern of services across the Ouzel Valley Team

All Saints

Sundays:

8am Holy Communion

9.30am Parish Eucharist

11.30am (usual pattern but can vary occasionally)

1st Sunday: Messy Mass

3rd Sunday: All Age Service

2nd & 4th Sunday: Holy Baptism

6pm Evening Prayer

1st Sunday: Choral Evensong Plus

3rd Sunday: Sung with hymns
(NO choir) followed by Benediction

2nd & 4th Sunday: Said Evensong

Weekdays:

Holy Communion

7.30pm Tuesday

*(temporarily 1st & 3rd Tuesdays only,
with Service of Healing on 3rd Tuesday)*

10.00am Thursday

9.00am Saturday

St. Barnabas, Linslade

Sundays:

8am Said Eucharist

10am Parish Eucharist

6pm Evensong

www.stbarnabaslinslade.uk

St. Leonard's, Heath & Reach

Sundays:

8am: Holy Communion

11am Holy Communion (in church & via Zoom)

1st Sundays: Family Service

Tuesdays: 7pm Holy Communion

Morning Prayer via Zoom:

9.00am Monday - Saturday

www.saintleonardschurch.com

St. Michael's, Eggington

9.30am 1st & 3rd Sundays: Holy Communion

St. Nicholas', Hockliffe

9.30am 2nd Sundays: Family Communion

4th Sundays: Holy Communion

St. Michael's and All Angels, Billington

11.15am Holy Communion

Good Shepherd, Astral Park Sports & Community Centre, Johnson Drive, Sandhills, LU7 4AY:

Sundays at 9.45am:

1st Sunday: Holy Communion & CGS Juniors

2nd Sunday: 'In the Community', at Astral Park

3rd Sunday: Family Service

4th Sunday: Bring and share breakfast and Holy Communion

Free pop-up café every Sunday from 9.45am

Sunday Saints: for age 3+ year olds, meets during 9.30am Sunday service at All Saints.

All Saints Toddler Time: All Saints every Wednesday during term time, at 9.30am & at 1.30pm. £1.50 per parent / carer & child; 50p extra per child; refreshments included.

Leighton Young Singers Club: for children in Years 2-6, meets on Fridays at 6.30 - 7.30pm.

Bereavement Café: a support group offering friendship and understanding.

1st Sunday of the month, 2.30-4pm The Spire Coffee Shop, All Saints

Choir Practice: Friday evenings, 6.45 trebles; 7.30 adults.

Bellringers: Practice on Monday, 7.30 - 9.30pm.

Spire Coffee Shop: Tuesday, Friday & Saturday 10am - 2pm.

Contact Details on Page 2.

News Roundup

Welcome to this Bumper 'Holiday' issue of *Saints Alive* for both July and August. All information is up to date as at the time of publication. The next issue will be September.

*** **

Prebendary David MacGeoch will be licensed as Vicar of All Saints Leighton Buzzard, on Saturday 7th September at 4pm by Bishop Alan, the Bishop of St. Albans. After the service wine and canapes will be served. Please sign up on the sheet in church, or email parish@allsaintslb.org.uk if you are attending, to assist us with the catering.

*** **

The Coffee Shop will be closed from 2.00pm Saturday 10th August, reopening 10am Tuesday 3rd September.

*** **

Please remember that during Holiday Club week (12th - 16th August) access into church will be restricted to anyone not wearing an 'Everyone's a Winner' t-shirt!



Worth a smile

☺ The minister went to the bank and asked for a statement of his account, adding: "We want to know how far afield we can go for our holiday." Handing him his statement the cashier enquired very gently: "Have you got a field at the back of your garden, sir?"

☺ A golfing priest, after having been beaten by an elderly parishioner, returned to the clubhouse somewhat depressed. "Cheer up," said the layman. Remember, you'll eventually be burying me some day." "Yes," said the priest. "But even then, it will be your hole!"

☺ I'm supposed to respect my elders, but it's getting harder and harder for me to find one now.

☺ A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk, I have a work station.

☺ To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.

☺ In filling out an application, where it says, "In case of emergency, notify ..." I answered, "a doctor."



Weeks after the Pet's Service, nobody had claimed the monkey

Parish Registers

Holy Matrimony, May:

25: Daniel Cascoe & Evelyn Persaud at All Saints

Holy Matrimony, June:

1: Richard Crosland & Emily Duke at All Saints, Grant Forbes & Leah Andrew at All Saints
'Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate'

Holy Baptism, May:

12: Casey Oscar Barry Atkinson, Rueben Ash Lansley; 26: Alexandra Felina Wadcock

Holy Baptism, June:

9: Ava Grace Sullivan, Ariana Eva Gwendoline Dixon, Sofia Marina Suzan Dixon, Nellie Rae Reynolds, Lauren Goodyear, Hope Gladys Blease; 30: Abigail Mary Holbrook
'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'

R.I.P. May:

10: Graham Sizeland at Bierton; 13: Eileen Burtonshaw at St. Leonard's;
14: Audrey Chandler at St. Leonard's; 16: Margaret Field at St. Nicholas;
23: Josephine Sharplin at St. Barnabas; 24: Mavis Kidd at Old Linslade Cemetery;
24: Malcolm Jones at All Saints

R.I.P. June:

6: Raymond Smith at St. Leonard's; 28: Roy Turney at Bierton
'Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die'

Years Mind, July:

1: William Gilbert, Margaret Nash; 4: Mary Titchmarsh; 5: Joyce Huggins; 6: David Edgoose;
7: Vicki Smith; 8: Ruth Kiddle, Stephen Goodger; 9: Florence Groom, Elizabeth Hankins,
Meg Hollins; 10: Joy Reynolds; 11: Eva Milne; 13: Primrose Cox;
14: Iris Marko, Marilyn Coleman; 15: David Gray; 17: Canon Alan Freeman, Josie Watkiss;
19: Christopher Hinchliff; 20: Blake Edwards; 21: Michael Myers; 24: Judith Woodruff;
25: Dick Spratley; 26: John Brantom, William Parris; 29: Charles Beauchamp

Years Mind, August:

2: Annie Clements; 7: Norman Rumbelow, Bert Whitney; 8: Raymond Fisher;
9: Marion Deeley, David Harrington, Frances Maclennan; 12: John Froud; 13: Ursula Smith;
16: Wilfred Dumble, Margaret Dumble; 20: Doreen Rolls; 22: Elsie Daniel, Doris Dunnett;
24: Leslie Nash, Linda Wood, Philip Harding; 26: Bernard McAuliffe;
27: Catherine Flynn, Matthew Stephen Jones

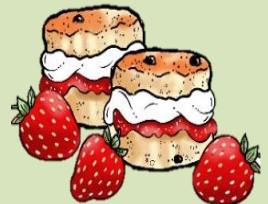
Summer Cream Teas in English country churchyards

Hockliffe: 20th July, & 10th August 3.00-5.00pm

Eggington: 28th July 3.00 - 5.00pm

Billington: 29th September

St Mary's Old Linslade: open first Sunday every month 2.00 – 4.00pm



Pulford VA Lower School

Head Teacher: Rev'd Dave Heather, MBE

Office Manager: Mrs Alison Quick

Tel: 01525 372188

Website: www.pulfordschool.org

A church school for
a whole community



What do you actually do?

One of the great privileges of being a governor at Pulfords is having the opportunity to go into the school and meet the children. They always have something interesting and unexpected to say, and the conversations you have with them really make you think.

One such occasion happened recently when I was walking around the corridors with Mr Heather and he introduced me to a young man. "Harry, this is Mr Price, he's the Chair of Governors." To which Harry replied, "Hello Mr Price, nice to meet you" then a slight pause... "What do you actually do?"

Direct and challenging, and it certainly gave me pause to reflect on the role and what it means. Of course, there is the formal job description (for which there is a twenty-three-page government document!) which includes the maintaining of educational standards, leading the strategic direction and making sure the finances are well managed. It also includes holding the head teacher to account for the performance of the school or, as I replied to Harry, "making sure Mr Heather is a good boy and does his job properly!"

But what does that mean in practice?

One of the most important ways that I carry out my role is by visiting the school on a regular basis, to have a fortnightly catch-up with Mr Heather, visit some classes or just to be a presence in the building, meeting staff, children and parents and trying to gauge what is important to them and share in their experiences of the school. I value this time greatly and I always look forward to spending time with the Pulford family.

My other important role is leading the Governing Body in fulfilling our various responsibilities. We are blessed in having a brilliant team of Governors with a diverse range of skills and a passionate commitment to Pulfords. The sense of teamwork and collective endeavour that we embody is extremely inspiring and, I am glad to say, was reflected in the recent inspection reports we had from OFSTED and SIAMS.

The SIAMS report gave me particular pride. This extract from it sums up all that I hope to achieve on behalf of the school:

"Leaders at Pulford Lower School have built an inspiring and joyful community in which everyone is enabled to flourish. The school's well established Christian vision is the golden thread which permeates all the school's work"

So, in answer to what I actually do, it is that – I support the whole school family to flourish and uphold our vision of Growing God's family through faith, hope and love – and I consider myself very fortunate to be given the opportunity to do so.

Ed Price, Chair of Governors



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Selections

*Pet, gift and garden.
Household, kitchen tools and
electrical items.
Calor Gas, DIY and repairs.
Memorial.*



selections_pet_garden

Schools' Trail: the Church's Year



Once again, All Saints has provided the most amazing setting for a school trail – welcoming nearly 700 children from all the town's lower schools, and this time, a Year 5 group from a middle school as well.

These trails are a collaborative effort between Pulford and All Saints, with volunteers from many of the town's churches, and elsewhere, helping to take the children on a whistlestop tour of the colours of the Anglican church's year, building on the children's basic knowledge of 'seasons'

It is hard to describe what is achieved – there are so many beautiful moments, too many to describe them all, but comments from staff, volunteers and children include:

- ✚ Feeling of peace and calm when we walked in;
- ✚ One little boy 'didn't like the look of the place' before he entered and did NOT like looking at the word 'devil' (on the cross), but by the end he was lighting a candle and saying a prayer.
- ✚ The 'hope clouds' were very moving! Children hoping for peace in their lives and families!
- ✚ Many teachers commented on what a wonderful experience this is for them, and their children.

Congratulations and thanks to all involved, especially Lindsay Bevis & Luisa Borelli.



On a musical note.....



A message from the Director of Music; & Farewell from the retiring head chorister

As we look back on the musical life of our church for the year 2023/24, there is much to be thankful for:

- choir numbers are up, both in the treble and adult rows;
- the Advent Carol service was as magical as ever;
- we are busy rehearsing for exciting cathedral trips – St Albans on 29th June and 4 days in Exeter in August;
- a pilot of the concept of short, lunchtime concerts was very successful, with around 75 people much appreciating the musicianship of 4 saxophonists from the Purcell School of music (our former Organ Scholar's old school);
- members of the choir joined Stewkley Singers in a superb performance of Verdi's Requiem.

Many thanks to Francesca Price, our Head chorister, who is leaving us this year. Francesca and I joined All Saints at roughly the same time, and it has been great to see her develop over the years into the fine singer that she is now.

Paul Dickens, Director of Music

Farewell from Francesca Price, retiring head chorister:



Over the past 10 years, this choir has taught me many things. It taught me to believe in myself and it has also helped my leadership skills. When I joined the choir in 2013, I was 7 years old and very shy, but I had a love for music that was influenced by the music my parents would play in the house. They introduced me to a lot of gorgeous classical music, which then influenced me to join choir, so I could sing music similar to what they were practising most days.

When I started I was scared to sing up, and I was so intimidated by the bigger girls who were all so confident, but as time went on, I became friends with them and I looked up to all of them and they showed me that I didn't have to be scared. The friendships that I have made mean so much to me and I see them all as family.

This choir has made me who I am today: it has given me the confidence to take part in many school shows; participate in public speaking events; and I will be applying for law at university in the coming months. I have the most sincere thanks to give to all those who have been involved in the choir. Without them I would not have been able to get where I am today. I have grown up in this choir and I will definitely be coming back at Christmas and whenever I am needed.

I will miss being in the choir so much, but I am confident that it will be left in good hands when I leave. Thank you for an amazing 10 years.

Fran Price

Farewell from the Curate

A curate is only ever bestowed on a parish for a season, and sadly that season for me is drawing to its close. It was announced last month that I have been appointed to be College Chaplain at Christ Church in Oxford and will be leaving All Saints and the Ouzel Valley Team this summer to begin the next phase of my ministry in Oxford in September.



This brief farewell comes with my hearty thanks for all the encouragement, laughter and support each of you has shown me over the last three years. In my time here I've finished a PhD, helped juggle a vacancy, held two choristers up by their feet (I will miss our quirky traditions!), baptised more babies than I can count, re-discovered each summer that I can't act, and eaten my body weight in delicious coffee shop cakes many times over. There have been times of challenge and times of deep joy and I know I will remember you all and all you have been to me in the years ahead.

As one time Secretary General of the UN and keen ecumenist Dag Hammarskjöld once wisely said:
"For all that has been, thanks; for all that is to be, yes!"

Please do continue to pray for me; I promise to continue in prayer for you.

Mother Kirsty



Mother Kirsty's last Sunday will be 14th July – she'll preside and preach in the morning and officiate at Evensong. All are welcome to Afternoon Tea at All Saints at 4pm and to refreshments following Evensong. (Please sign up on the sheet in church, or email parish@allsaintslb.org.uk if you are attending, to assist us with the catering.)

She will also take the Pulford's Leavers' Service on Friday 19th July.

Kirsty's licensing and installation at Christ Church is likely to take place at Evensong (6pm) on Sunday 1st September. More details and a proper invitation to follow.

Calendar of Events

3rd July & 7th August

Lunch Club in the North Transept, All Saints 1pm
Tickets £6.00 available from the Coffee Shop.



6th July

Summer Fete All Saints 10am-3pm



7th July

Services as usual including Messy Mass BBQ

All Saints 11.30am



7th July & 4th August

Bereavement Support Café

Coffee Shop, All Saints 2.30pm – 4pm



14th July

Leavers' Sunday

Parish Eucharist 9.30am

Farewell to Mother Kirsty: tea & cake 4pm

Choral Evensong 6pm

followed by wine & cheese



19th July

Crafty Natter All Saints 1.30pm - 3.30pm



21st July & 4th August & 18th August

All Age Communion All Saints 11.30am



ALL-AGE WORSHIP



**All Saints
Holiday Club
12th - 16th August
“Everyone’s a winner”**





All Saints Parish Church Leighton Buzzard

SUMMER FETE

Saturday 6th July - 11am to 3pm

Fete set in Church Grounds



FREE ENTRY

FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY

STALLS - MUSIC - REFRESHMENTS - ETC



on ...

*History all around us,
shaping the
worshipping community
in The Ouzel Valley*



There can't be many pubs formerly owned by a charity for 300 years, but Leighton Buzzard's Golden Bell is one of the few. When he died in March 1603, William Duncombe left the house and two adjoining cottages in Church End in Leighton Buzzard, plus a couple of acres of land in the common fields, in trust for the poor of the parish. 12 Trustees were to apply the profits specifically for "the benefit of the deserving and necessitous persons resident in the parish", to pay for clothes, linen, bedding, fuel, tools, medical aid in sickness, and for loans in times of loss or destitution.

The building seems to have been a pub from the start, and on market days its stable yard was used to parade horses which were for sale.

A report in the Leighton Buzzard Observer of 26th July 1889: "On Saturday evening, as a horse and cart, belonging to Mr. Whitman, market gardener, of Linslade, was being backed out of the yard of the Golden Bell Inn, the horse, by some means, managed to get one of its feet fixed in a narrow gutter, and could not extricate it. The animal struggled violently for some time, but its efforts were of no avail. At length the bystanders picked up the pavement, and freed the horse's leg. The hoof was considerably injured by the effort of the horse to release itself, but under the care of Professor Armatage, veterinary surgeon, the animal is going on favourably, and was able to be removed from the Bell stables yesterday".

The Golden Bell, Church Square

Possibly a lodging house

for the 13th century stonemasons who built All Saints



The Golden Bell of old drawings was a low-roofed thatched house. Outside, it still retains the last of the wooden posts that once lined the whole square for tying up cattle. It is believed that this built on the site of a thirteenth century lodging house used by the stonemasons who at that time were constructing All Saints Church. Sadly, this latter picturesque story cannot be substantiated, but it's a nice idea.

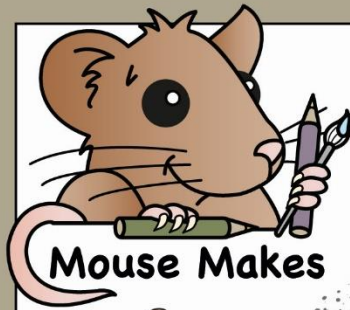
The front of the present building dates from the 18th century, the building behind being earlier, though no century can be ascribed to it. It is timber-framed with brick nogging and an old tile roof. In 1876 the countywide register of alehouse licenses stated that the inn was first licensed in 1603.

It has been proved that this date was not necessarily accurate, and seems to come from the fact that the first mention of the building (then simply described as a tenement in Church End and so not an inn or public house) was in that year, when William Duncombe devised it in his will



By the 19th century, the Golden Bell or 'Bottom Bell' as it was known in deference to its older cousin at the top of the High Street, seemed to have been going downhill. It changed landlord every few years and gained something of a bad reputation. By June 1875 the landlord Richard Ginger was up before Francis Bassett Esq the magistrate on a charge of threatening behaviour. Sarah Ann his wife said his threats to her were such "to cause her to go in bodily fear".

Two weeks later he was before the courts again for suffering drunkenness upon his licensed premises, and further charged with having kept his pub open for the sale of intoxicating liquors after closing time, 11pm. Richard Ginger separated from his wife and moved to London, to "make the best of a bad case from a domestic point of view". The licence was transferred to his brother Joseph Ginger. Colonel Gilpin remarked that the house had been "for some considerable time notoriously misconducted". In 1898 the trustees decided to sell the property including the pub, cottages and the land. The auction was held at the Corn Exchange and the Golden Bell was bought by the Aylesbury Brewery Company.



Mouse Makes

How many days did the Lord tell Joshua to march around the city of Jerico?

Joshua 6:3



What did the priests carry that were made from rams' horns?

Joshua 6:4

What was carried along behind the priests?

The _____

Joshua 6:4



On the seventh day how many times did they march around Jerico?

Joshua 6:6



Who was saved from Jerico along with her family?

Joshua 6:17

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

READ
 the story
 in *Joshua*
 5:13-6:27

JERICO • LORD • JOSHUA • ISRAEL • KING • PRIESTS • GUARD
 CAMP • MARCH • AROUND • DAYS • WALK • ONCE • BLOW • HORN • SOUND
 DAWN • SHOUT • CITY • WALL • FELL • FLAT • FIRE • BURN • DESTRUCTION

Find the question answers in the word search too!

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Bike 'n Hike 14th September: Do join our team



Sponsored Bike 'n Hike
BEDS AND HERTS HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST



Do you fancy a lovely day out walking or cycling and calling in to see some beautiful local historic churches? Why not join our team for Bike 'n Hike and you could raise money for All Saints – and other historic churches in Beds and Herts just by taking part.

[Left: bikes old & new, St Mary's Potton 2023]

The event is the main annual fundraiser for the Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust which gives grants to repair churches in the two counties. Bike 'n Hike 2024 raised almost 100,000, and over the years the Trust has awarded over £150,000 to All Saints. Find out more at: www.bedshertshct.org.uk

People get sponsored to take part – you can walk, cycle or maybe push toddlers in a buggy. Half the sponsor money comes straight to All Saints while the rest goes to BHHCT to give as grants. Last year, All Saints' team raised £1,200 and received a Silver Certificate.

This year we hope to have two groups of walkers: one group will do a shorter gentle walk around the town, while the second will go for a longer hike, but we would love to have a cycling group too. If you would like to join us on foot or on wheels, Katrina Grant would love to hear from you. T: 07531 748339 katrina.r.grant@btinternet.com

Katrina Grant

Toddler Toddle 2024

Many thanks to Vincent, Elsa, Arthur, Malichi, Abigail and Bethany who walked, ran or were pushed along the path around All Saints on 8th June. They wish to thank all the lovely people who sponsored them. Together they collected over £150 which will go towards two diocesan projects, Away from It All holidays and 4 refuges in St Albans diocese.

To mark the occasion the children all received a certificate and sticker.

Alison Dobbie

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families





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St. Nicholas, Hockliffe

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Churchwardens:

Brian Speller: 210565; Tom Ware



Timeless Questions

There are three great questions in life which have baffled the greatest minds since the dawn of time: *To be or not to be?*

Which came first, the chicken or the egg?

Cream followed by jam, or jam followed by cream?

It is at this time of the year that minds and appetites turn to the third of these three great conundrums. Cream teas are thought to have been first served at Tavistock Abbey in Devon during the 11th Century. The monks fed the farm labourers with bread, clotted cream and jam. Nobody was counting any calories.

The popularity really blossomed with two great Victorian inventions: the railways and the seaside holiday, during the 1850s.

The substitution of bread for a scone also led to another great question: *should it be pronounced as 'Skone or Skoon'?* However, having more than 3 great questions is over-indulgence, as is having more than 3 'Skoons' or 'Skones'.

In the great cream teas debate, the question of the assembly of the topping could also be phrased as *'Do You Prefer a Cornish Cream Tea or a Devonian Cream Tea?'*

In Cornwall, it is believed that the jam should be introduced to the warm scone ('Skone' or 'Skoon') first, with a dollop of cream following swiftly behind. In Devon, one should make a lavish spreading of the cream on the scone ('Skone' or 'Skoon') first, followed by a splodge of jam after.

The debate about whether one is a Cornish person or a Devonian, whilst not having yet led to bloodshed, is no less fervent than the debate about whether one should wear a red rose or a white rose, held by our cousins 'oop North'.

The cream tea should not be confused with afternoon tea which, whilst it may include scones with jam and cream, is a much more elaborate affair with sandwiches and cakes and tea.

Should this small excursion into the world of cream teas have whetted your appetite then you will be delighted to know that St Nicholas Church is having two cream tea events: one on 20th July 2024 and the other on 10th August 2024, both from 3-5pm.

The ladies of the Church will be happy to serve your cream tea in the fashion of either of the south-west counties.

Roger Spalding

St. Michael & All Angels, Billington

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens:

Sandra Brewin 373644; Julia Haviland 850380



I often ask myself why I so much enjoy being part of the congregation of St Michael & All Angels church in Billington and I think the reason may be a lot to do with history. Yes, being closer to God is part of it and seeing friends and neighbours on a regular basis is a pleasure but I think for me it is about following in the footprints of history. I love the ancient building, the stonework and the timbers, the oak pews and panelling and the stained-glass windows and as I sit and appreciate these things I think of how this site atop the hill has been a Christian place of worship for nearly eight hundred years. I love the idea that we are following the same basic actions that the villagers of Great and Little Billington have followed for much of this time, including the trudge up the hill, and that in many cases we sing the same hymns and follow the same service format. To me the church is the centre of the community, and it is here that people work together. It is here that we make lasting friendships; and it is here that we say our first hellos and our last goodbyes.

In the last issue of Saints Alive we read of the power of a few words of gratitude spoken to those who volunteer. I offer you four more that I find particularly inspiring: *"How can I help?"* A simple, sincere and heartfelt way of joining in and achieving something worthwhile together. Let us hope that the good villagers will still be trudging up that hill for hundreds of years to come, to sing the same hymns that we sing today, to volunteer to keep this beautiful building in good order and to keep saying, *"how can I help?"*

Two events in the spring were excellent examples of helping out as we saw 18 adults and 3 children turning out for what was the 'Winter Walk' fund raiser, but now switched to springtime; and 15 adults armed with mops, buckets, dusters etc for the spring clean-up. A big thank you to all involved. September will see another clean-up day and we will also have a cream tea in the churchyard. The traditional Italia Day lunch will be held in the village hall on June 29th (avoiding that trudge up the hill!) and will be organised by the indefatigable Jean Albertella and her wonderful volunteers.

We have missed Revd. Steve while he has been on sabbatical, and trust that he has benefitted from this time of recharging his batteries! He returns to us in time for our annual parish meeting in June at which we have to give our thanks to Sandra Brewin who is standing down as church warden after 28 years. She has served the church and congregation with love in that impressively long time, and we are hugely grateful for her devotion. Tina Thompson will join Julia Haviland as our church wardens while James Cook continues in his assisting role. We are most grateful to them all.

Geoff Haviland

St. Michael's, Eggington

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Church Officers:

Carol Hart 384634; Paul Brown 751861



Noel – our much-loved vicar celebrated the 40th anniversary of his Ordination. The party in St. Leonards Village Hall was very well attended and enjoyed by all. The theme for the celebration lunch was The Mad Hatters Tea Party so everyone had to wear a hat.

Our annual plant sale was held in the churchyard, and we received donations of £554. We thank Julie, Lorraine and their team for the hard work that goes into this event over a long period of time, but it's well worth it. Also, tea and delicious home-made cakes were served in the village hall, organised by Martine and her helpers. We started using our Contactless sum up machine which is going to be very useful. Progress!!

Although it is important to raise money for the maintenance and upkeep of the church, the main purpose of these events is to draw members of the village together socially. Our congregation is quite small, and these events encourage people to come and walk around the churchyard and have a look in the church itself. I have been told by someone who doesn't attend church services, that having gone inside St Michael's with her small daughter she realised what a beautiful church it was and will be visiting again. Christingle for instance. Must start somewhere.

Our congregation has been getting larger thanks to the attendance of other team members from Hockliffe and Heath & Reach. We have had quite a few new families moving into Eggington over the last couple of years and some have joined our congregation.

Paul and his working parties continue to keep the churchyard beautifully maintained. Julie does a wonderful job cutting the grass, although it seems to be getting a bit out of hand in this weather. We have a big wedding coming up in August and want it to look especially lovely.

Also, we are all grateful to 'The Triangle Fairies' who plant and tend the lovely flowerbed at the entrance to the village, which changes with the seasons. Such a variety of colour. There is so much talent in Eggington!



Best wishes, Angela Dyer

Our Love Nature in the Churchyard event on 8 June was a community event with many visitors of all ages getting their hands muddy making wildflower seedbombs. There was a bit of competition in completing our nature and wildlife bingo sheet which encouraged tree hugging, smelling flowers, hearing birdsong, feeling textures of moss and bark and seeing all sorts of insects - a full sensory experience.

Our eagle-eyed citizen scientists added hundreds of entries to the national churchyard biodiversity database and the Tree Trail continues to impress everyone. The plant stall raised around £200 for the All Saints' Solar Panel fund which was set up in memory of Gary Hargreaves.

Join the Big Butterfly Count this summer



Butterflies have reduced in number in recent years. They are not only beautiful but are essential to many ecosystems. You can help with the conservation of butterflies and moths by joining in with the Big Butterfly Count from 12 July – 4 August. The charts opposite will help you identify what you see.

Take part by choosing a day and place – a garden or churchyard, spend 15 minutes in a sunny spot, noting any butterflies or moths. You can use the printed butterfly charts on the Eco Church noticeboard in the North Transept or download a chart from the website www.bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org or get the free app.

Katrina Grant

How to make seed bombs



You will need:

- Meadow flower seeds or seeds collected from the garden
- Peat-free compost
- Water
- Powdered clay (from craft shops - use clay soil if you can't find any)
- Mixing bowl

- 1 In a bowl, mix together 1 cup of seeds with 5 cups of compost and 2-3 cups of clay powder.
- 2 Slowly mix in water with your hands until everything sticks together, then roll mixture into firm balls.
- 3
- 4 Now for the fun bit – plant by throwing your seed bombs at bare parts of the garden!



How many different butterflies can you spot this summer? As well as signing up to www.bigbutterflycount.org the All Saints' Eco team would love to hear about your Butterfly Count. *[ID charts from the Big Butterfly Count website.]*



Spend 15 minutes in a sunny spot

Use this chart to note how many of each species you see



Small Tortoiseshell



Large White



Small White



Speckled Wood



Common Blue



Holly Blue



Painted Lady



Comma



Small Copper



Gatekeeper



Please note: Images not to scale. Males and females of some species vary and are not all illustrated on this chart. Please refer to the Big Butterfly Count app or website for more information on how to identify butterflies and moths correctly.

Submit your sightings at www.bigbutterflycount.org

Or download our free app by scanning the QR code!



Peacock



Green Veined White



Red Admiral



Brimstone



Silver Y



Ringlet



Marbled White



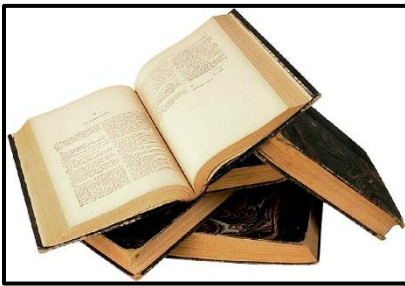
Meadow Brown



Six-spot Burnet



Jersey Tiger



Biblical Genres

*A series exploring
the different kinds of writing in the bible.*

This month:

***The Apocrypha ...
by Rev'd Dr. Bernard Minton***

The apocryphal books of the Bible need some more respect, I think: they tend to be regarded rather dubiously. The word really just means 'private': apocryphal books were originally books that were considered worth reading in private, but which did not gain acceptance as Scripture to be read publicly in Church, often because they were known not to be written by an apostle, and were (to the first Christians) of relatively modern origin. In this category are things like the letters of St Clement, or The Shepherd by Hermas: these are books that were written by early Christians, and which some early Christians thought of as Scripture, but which were not universally accepted. There are also Old Testament equivalents: things like the Book of Enoch, or the Book of Jubilees, or the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. Many of these, especially the Book of Enoch, were very important to early Christians (the letter of Jude quotes from Enoch and calls it 'Scripture').

It is worth noting that apocrypha and apocalypse are not the same, though they do overlap!! Apocryphal books are those not considered Scriptural: apocalyptic books are those in which a divine revelation about things to come is given to a human by an angel or in a vision. The most famous of these is sometimes called The Apocalypse – the Revelation to St John. But it is only one of many, inside and outside Scripture: apocalypses can be apocryphal, and apocryphal books might be apocalypses, but there is not always any overlap at all: the letters of St Clement, for example, are just like St Paul's letters.

Mostly, though, the word 'apocrypha' when used in the Christian Biblical context refers to one specific group of books that are either Scriptural, or not, depending on your viewpoint. These are books that are in the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament used by most of the first Christians) but not in the Masoretic text (the Hebrew version of the Old Testament, that was definitively agreed in the ninth century, but which existed in various different versions before then). There is no consensus among the Churches about what is, and is not, Scriptural. This means that most non-denominational modern Bibles put them in a separate section between the Old and New Testaments, and let the reader make up their own mind about whether they are Scriptural or not!

Protestant churches tend to say 'we'll stick to the Hebrew, thank you', and thus they leave out a number of books used by early Christians, and included in Catholic and Orthodox Bibles as Scripture.

These ‘apocryphal’ books include Tobit; Judith; the Wisdom of Solomon; the Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach; Baruch; various books of the Maccabees; and various books of Esdras (or Ezra).

Meanwhile, at the other end of the scale, the Tewahedo Church of Ethiopia and Eritrea includes most of those, as well as Enoch and Jubilees and a number of other books not often translated into English or included in any other Bible, and thus not even included among the apocrypha in most Bibles!

Because of the wide variety of the apocrypha, it’s hard to come to one judgement about it all. Books like Tobit and Judith are wonderful (in my opinion!); personal stories of angels and adventure. The various overlapping books of the Maccabees are about the Jewish revolt against the heirs of Alexander the Great. They are historical accounts, and contain some very gory details of martyrdoms, but are historically interesting, and also rather tedious in places. It’s easy to get lost in all the political and military shenanigans. There are marvellous additions to the Book of Daniel, displaying him as a worthy precursor to Sherlock Holmes, and some books of Wisdom that are theologically insightful and stimulating.

Personally, I really like what the Revised Standard Version of the Bible calls “2 Esdras”, which unhelpfully has a different name in almost every Bible (depending on how many books of Ezra you think there are !). It is an apocalypse, because it contains some visions supposedly given to the scribe Ezra about why Jerusalem has been destroyed, and what will happen next. He has long talks with an angel, and gets regularly reminded of how little he knows! The version included in the RSV is probably one that combines Jewish and Christian traditions together in one book.

Meanwhile, the Book of Enoch (which exists in several different versions) is also apocalyptic, and involves a lot of angels, both good and bad. It is rather like the Revelation of St John: a bit wild and fantastical. I always think that both those books are like the later Marvel films in the franchise: extraordinary things happen all the time, but it helps if you understand all the continuity behind them!

I think that the most important thing that the Apocrypha tells us, really, is that Scripture is a movable, living entity. There isn’t just one Bible, and God doesn’t reveal Himself to us as though He were giving a lecture, or we were sponges. God’s revelation of Himself is a creative, two-way process; a conversational disclosure of Himself, that occurs through the telling of stories: through sober theological thought; through apocalyptic and hallucinatory visions; and through the gruesome and intricately tortuous politicking of real historical figures. The Apocryphal books remind us that the Bible is a library not a book, and a conversation more than a library; a conversation we are having now with our ancestors, our descendants, our fellow worshippers, and with God, above all.

Dip into the apocrypha, and see what you find!

Fr. Bernard

On the perils of 'standing in' for another vicar



The Rectory St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

You should not complain about doing duty in other churches when their clergy are on holiday. It is only in other churches that you will be appreciated. Beatification only comes from your own church on the day you leave – which is a way of firing a shot across the bows of your successor. I remember being greeted by a churchwarden on my first day here at St James the Least of All with the encouraging words: 'I've seen six Rectors of this parish; each one was worse than the last.' As the years have gone by, I am sure I will have entirely fulfilled his expectations.

No; when you visit another church, you will be told all the many defects of their own vicar, and whatever *you* do will be praised. Store up these memories for the day you return to your own patch – when you will then be told how outstanding your own temporary replacement has been and how congregations thrived in your absence.

Naturally, this gives you the right to make similar remarks about your own congregation in the churches you visit. Unfavourable comparisons with the bell ringers, vergers and congregational singing in your home patch to the superb standards in the church you're temporarily serving will be much appreciated. Just make sure that the church you are staffing is sufficiently far from your own that word will not get back to your home team.

It is a mistake I made only once. After filling in for a colleague, I happened to complement the choir on the singing of the anthem. Unknown to me, a tenor was the second cousin of my organist, who received a rather embellished story that I had compared my own choir back home unfavourably with theirs. On my return the following Sunday, all the hymns were played fortissimo and at double speed and the choir in rotation dropped hymn books throughout my sermon.

Inevitably, when you staff another church, you will be told: 'It's the normal Service.' It will be *nothing of the sort*. Hymns will appear in unexpected places, Sunday schools will enter and leave (and enter again) apparently at random, objects will be brought to you to be read from, placed on the altar or blessed - just as you were about to try and find the pulpit. In any case, wherever you are standing, you will find you should have been standing somewhere else. But not to worry - most mistakes will be forgiven – provided your sermon is short.

So - enjoy your visits to other churches. And above all, make sure that your temporary replacement is so spectacularly incompetent that your own people will welcome you back with open arms on your return

Your loving uncle,
Eustace



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