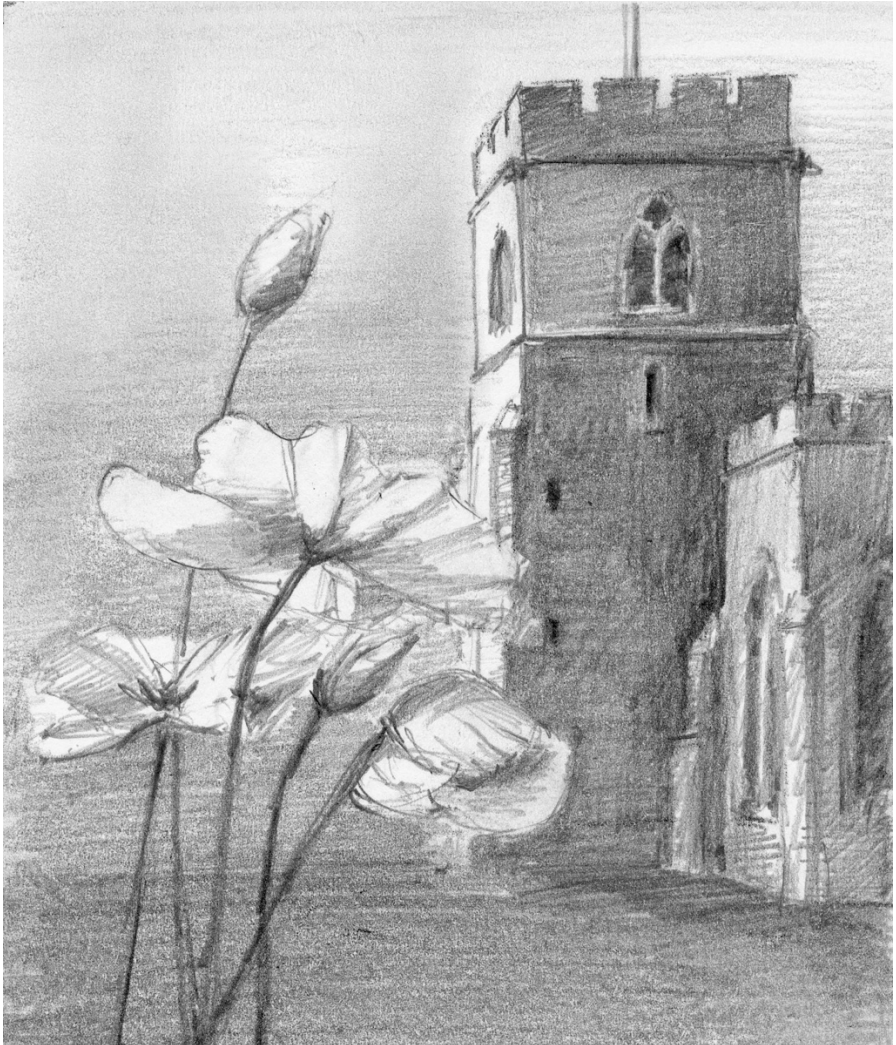


# Parish News

St Peter and St Paul, Little Gaddesden

£ 1.00

November 2023



Remembrance

## **St Peter and St Paul, Little Gaddesden HP4 1NZ**

### **Berkhamsted Team**

#### **Revd John Russell, Team Rector**

St John's Vicarage, Pipers Hill, Great Gaddesden, HP1 3BY

Tel: 01442 214898, 07950 105802

**vicar@littlegaddesdenchurch.org.uk**

**www.littlegaddesdenchurch.org.uk**

We are in the Berkhamsted Team Ministry with Great Berkhamsted, Great Gaddesden and Nettleden with Potten End. Enquiries regarding Baptisms, Banns, Weddings, Funerals and Memorials in the Churchyard should be made to the above-mentioned email address. Messages can also be left with the Churchwardens. If the Vicarage telephone is on the answering service, please leave a message. It will be attended to as soon as possible.

***All are welcome to our House of God. All have their place in His Kingdom and their part to play in His work***

Phone numbers preceded by code 01442 those noted.

ASSOCIATE PRIEST: Miranda Seldon 07761 165871

CHURCHWARDENS: Terri Adams 842746

Jane Dickson 07795 348938

READERS: Anthony Archer 842397

Heather Tisbury 01582 842807

PCC OFFICERS: Treasurer: Allan Webster 843157

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SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Heather Tisbury 01582 842807

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR: Helene Hockings on a\_dmin-church@outlook.com or 01442 842493

SUNDAY SERVICES: 9.00am Eucharist Service or Café Church (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday)

6.00pm Evensong at Nettleden on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday  
of the month

6.00pm Occasional Iona or Taizé services

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday – Joint Eucharist at one of our three churches

### **Please do check the website for up-to-date details**

THOMAS FIELD HALL: email: tfh.bookings@littlegaddesdenchurch.org.uk

WEEKDAY SERVICE: Thursday 10am Said Eucharist

BELL RINGING: Sunday 8.30am Practice: Tuesday 8.00pm

Tower Captain – Virginia Westmacott 842428

CHOIR PRACTICE: Friday 7.00pm – John Leonhardt 843550

LG CoFe PRIMARY SCHOOL: We welcome all children aged 4 – 11. Contact the Head Teacher for more information on 01442 842464 or  
admin@littlegaddesden.herts.sch.uk

PARISH NEWS EDITORS: Helene Hockings, Nick Murray, Mike Walsham.

See inside back page for contact details.

PITSTOP CAFÉ: Gayle Storey 01582 662132

WEEKLY UPDATES: PEW SHEET distributed each Sunday. Items for inclusion should be sent to Helene Hockings, a\_dmin-church@outlook.com by 9am on Thursday

## Vol 46 No.11

Dear Friends,

Our world is full of contrasts, both good and bad; as I write this, the world is watching and waiting with bated breath, for the start of the so-called 'incursion' by Israeli troops into the Gaza strip, with a million displaced people desperately hoping for a place of safety.

In Matthew's Gospel, chapter 22 verses 1-14, the parable of The Wedding Banquet is an example of contrasts. Jesus talks of how God's reign will be completed at the end of history; he tells of a king hosting a great wedding feast for his son. The banquet is prepared, everything is ready and the King, rather pleased with himself, summons the guests. Shockingly, some simply ignore the invitation, others head out of town and disappear to the hills, the rest beat up and kill the King's messengers. The generous host now becomes a sort of 'Godfather' figure who sends his heavies, to wipe out the invited guests – not a particularly nice image of God! Not to be disheartened, instead of sulking, the King orders others of his servants to go out to the highways and byways and invite everyone they see, both the good and the bad to come and join the feast.

Both the Gospels of Luke and the non-canonical Gospel of Thomas record this parable, but each writer with a different spin. Luke, very much in keeping with the overall theme of his Gospel describes the substitute guests as, *'the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame'*, the epitome of the Lucan Jesus, who preaches good news for the poor and welcomes the outcasts into the kingdom of God. In the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas, there is nothing elaborate, just a simple dinner where the guests refuse to come because the invitation conflicts with their business interests (they have money locked up in offshore investments - that sort of thing!).

In Matthew's Gospel, it's much more complicated. There's something of a contrast in how the Landowner (God) is portrayed, and it's easy to forget that the image of God as a gracious host, who hopes that everyone will come to the banquet, is a much more grumpy figure, who doesn't like the way some of the guests have come dressed.

But is it really about wearing the wrong clothes? Well, not totally; even though in our world, appearance can be everything. Even for a priest, what you wear can easily define you if you know what to look for. It

starts with the cassock and whether the buttons are on the side or up the middle, whether you wear a surplice or a cotta, a black scarf or a stole and whether or not you wear an alb!!

This image of God, at the heart of Matthew's parable – that of a gracious host - is easily lost. Whilst the food is getting cold, the heavies head out to inflict punishment and then compounding matters, the King sees that among the bad and good invited from the streets, there is a party-pooper not properly dressed. It's all a bit harsh and contradictory, as the King has the man in the offending dress, bound and thrown into the outer darkness.

I'm not sure how many of you will have seen the film or stage musical of *Mama Mia*? It brings together many of Abba's best-known songs and has been very successful. You might think the storylines are a bit sugary, but since 'Waterloo' and the Eurovision Song Contest, there is little doubt that Abba can write a good tune that you can whistle or sing along to. Whilst *Mama Mia* may be a bit fanciful and contrived, the storylines are really quite joyful and reflect the human condition. There are weddings and feasts and celebrations with steaming plates of food, much to drink and of course, enthusiastic singing and dancing.

Often in literature and in drama, weddings are the setting for a joyful resolution, when young lovers surmount numerous hurdles on the road to the altar - *Four Weddings and a Funeral* - springs to mind...

It is not only in the New Testament we find the image of God as generous host. The prophet Isaiah describes a feast of rich food and fine wine, where God will destroy death and wipe away every tear, as he invites all the nations to the table. Surely our image of God, portrayed so often by Jesus, is not the Matthean one portrayed in this particular parable but rather, one who calls everyone to his banquet, both good and bad? By implication though, we should prepare ourselves now, by being 'dressed' appropriately for the occasion.

So, what are we to wear?

Well, St Paul gives a hint in his letter to the Philippians: '*whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure ...* '.

This is developed in the letter to the Colossians:

*'As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience ... Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.'*

What an outfit! With clothes like those, we would never be thrown out of any banquet hosted by God.

Surely in the face of so many conflicts taking place all over the world, the distorted images of God, promoted under the banner of 'religion', need to be dismissed in favour of the generous forgiving and encompassing God, a God of love, hope and reconciliation?

I am yours in Christ,  
John.

### **GOODBYE, SUMMER SWALLOW**

I suppose I'm accustomed to the sudden, silent departure of the  
summer swift,

And being deprived of summer's most spectacular gifts.

Do they leave silently by night or slip away by day?

Is it those thermal currents which speed them on their way?

Their time with us, so short, but then there's still some summer left,  
Before the graceful swallows go, leaving summer empty and bereft.

The swallows give us time to admire their style and acrobatic grace,  
As they skim and wheel and dip their wings  
as if they own that space,

But so soon they chatter along the roof and zoom across the Green,  
For the time has come to gather, join together and convene,  
Now, at summer's end as the young try their skill upon the wing,  
So they flock and leave together, drawn south to another spring.

Josie Jeffrey

## **A SERMON ON MORTALITY**

Would you pay 51p to hear our Rector deliver a sermon on mortality? That is what one of his predecessors, the Reverend H G Woods was paid in 1902 (ten shillings and tenpence in old money). Three years later, his successor, the Reverend F E Clark, was paid even less, 37p. Why were they paid in this way at all? (The practice was discontinued after the first world war).

The answer can be found on a stone Benefaction Tablet on the south wall of the Tower.

One of the entries says this:

“1707. The REVd George Burghope gave in his lifetime £30, the interest to be divided between the Rector and poor equally, the Rector to read prayers and preach a sermon on mortality yearly on the 26<sup>th</sup> May, and distribute bread to the poor on that day. The money is in the hands of the Duke of Bridgewater”

Sixteen years later, on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1723, George Burghope set up another charity, this time in Edlesborough, where he had earlier been Vicar.

“In respect of 122 acres intermixed with the glebe land, the vicar is required to pay to the clerk 3s 4d for tolling the bell on St John’s Day and to pay the poor sums of 6s 8d for attending services on certain holy days, and 20s to poor widows and other poor within ten days after the funeral of the donor”.

George Burghope also gave £30 to buy 4 acres of land at Aslockton, near Newark, the interest on which was to go to the poor in annual payments.

Generous George had not finished.

Searching the National Archives, I found the following:

“12 May 1719: memoranda of receipt by Sir Griffith Boynton from Reverend George Burghope of £35; the interest of which is to be paid yearly, one third to a minister for preaching a sermon on mortality on anniversary of burial of Reverend George Burghope, and two thirds to the poor of Burton Agnes”.

That village is in the east riding of Yorkshire, a long way from the Chilterns, but it is the same man. Who was he, and why did he end up so far North? (He is buried in Burton Agnes, where there is a stone memorial to him, his wife and daughter). And why those sermons on mortality?

## GEORGE BURGHOPÉ M.A.

He was probably born around 1640. (He was described as an octogenarian in 1723). When George married, sometime in the 1670s, he was Vicar of Edlesborough (1667-1691) and already chaplain to the third earl of Bridgewater, and living next to St James Church, Clerkenwell, in London.

As chaplain, he would have followed the earl everywhere, and been with him when Bridgewater's two elder sons were burned to death in a fire at Bridgewater House in the Barbican in London in 1687. Their tutor was also burned to death. This terrible family trauma probably bonded the chaplain more closely to the earl and countess.

George Burghopé left Edlesborough, and became Rector of Little Gaddesden, on October 6<sup>th</sup> 1691, and retired from the post in 1713, twenty two years later. (I assume that he had curates who stood in for him while he was with the earl and countess in London, and visited his churches when he came with them to Ashridge).

George Burghopé had one daughter, Marie. She wrote a poem dedicated to Lady Mary Egerton, her contemporary, who was the elder daughter of the earl by his second wife Jane (Ann) Powlett. A copy of the poem, which I have not been able to read, is in the Huntington Library in the United States. Marie's poem is called "The Vision" and is described as 'a poem on Ashridge and the history of the Bridgewater family'. It was circulated in 1699.

In its dedication, which I have read, Marie Burghopé writes,

"Madam It has been the common Imputation of the Tyrants of the other sex, that Women had neither Learning, Prudence nor Conduct, and therefore were fit only to be Drudges of Mankind".

Marie clearly thought she had all three virtues!

A library note says: "In the 25-page country-house poem which follows, Burghopé describes her own transportation by her Muse in a chariot to Ashridge, where she describes the walk, the exterior of the house, and the grounds. They next enter the house, cloisters, chapel and garden, all of which are described in detail".

The poem may have been written to coincide with the 1699 dedication of the new chapel at Ashridge (now destroyed) which led out of the cloisters, and at which service the sermon was given by her father.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> earl died in 1701 but the countess lived on until 1716, and George Burghope, undoubtedly with her encouragement (the earl had been close to the royal household), continued to pour out protestant and royalist tracts.

He also published: "A Sermon Peached at the Parish-Church of St James Clerkenwell, on Tuesday the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 1704/5. Being the anniversary of the Martyrdom of King Charles the First".

A clue to his later charitable works is to be found in an essay he dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1695. It was described as "An essay to revive the necessity of the ancient charity and piety wherein God's right in our estates and our obligations to maintain his service, religion, and charity is demonstrated and defended against the pretences of covetousness and appropriation".

The Reverend George was true to his word. But why did he end up in Yorkshire?

Ann, Dowager Countess of Bridgewater, was patron of the living of Burton Agnes in the East Riding. Her father was the Duke of Bolton, and she had inherited land in the area.

She appointed George to be rector in 1703 and he remained in post until his death in 1727. (He remained rector of Little Gaddesden for ten years after his appointment to Burton Agnes. He cannot have been a regular presence in both at the same time, and he was also giving services in Clerkenwell. It is probable that he moved to Burton Agnes full time on the death of the countess in 1716.)

George Burghope, who died on the 26<sup>th</sup> May, hence the date for the mortality lecture, also left a bequest of books to a library in St Mary Magdalene church in Newark-on-Trent founded by the Bishop of Peterborough Thomas White (1629-1698).

And that I thought was that. My research into the life of Reverend George had come to an end. And then I picked up a copy of Vicars Bell's 'Little Gaddesden', published in 1949. He too had been wondering about what he described as the "riddle of the Rev. George Burghope's benefaction". Why



had Burghope wanted a sermon to be preached annually on the subject of Mortality?

Vicars found the solution when he translated an entry in Latin in our burial register. It reveals that Marie was not George Burghope's only child. This is Vicars' translation:

'1701. Musidorus Burghope, Priest of the English Church, son of George Burghope Rector of this Church, fell asleep in The Lord, quietly and at peace, on 21<sup>st</sup> December, and was buried 30<sup>th</sup> December.

'He was born in Edlesborough in the County of Bucks Aug 6<sup>th</sup>, 1677 at about 8 O'clock in the morning. He was educated at Oxford, where he was a Bachelor of Arts, and then at Emmanuel College, Cambridge where he graduated a Master. He then went to London and lived there for a few years, where, however, suffering from Phthis, he returned home to the country where he was known, and, amid the tears of all, he died at one o'clock on December 21<sup>st</sup>.

'He lies buried in the Chancell of Little Gaddesden betwixt the Countess of Bridgewater's Pew and the Pillar, under the women's seat'.

Phthis, or consumption, is today called pulmonary tuberculosis. It was also called 'the great white plague' and 'the robber of youth'. Musidorus was just 24 years of age.

ROGER BOLTON

PS Musidorus was a princely character in Sir Philip Sidney's popular 16<sup>th</sup> century poem 'Arcadia'.

Musidorus Burghope was apparently much respected. After his death his friends arranged for the publication of 'The government of the passion. A sermon preach'd in the Temple Church, on Midlent Sunday, March the 30<sup>th</sup>, 1701. By M.Burghope.'



**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

10.45am Meet at Village Hall and process to War Memorial on The Green for the service, including Two Minutes Silence.

Service of Remembrance including The Roll of Honour

Everyone is welcome

## **CITY CHURCHES - Part 9, walked in August 2023**

### **HOLBORN TO THE INNS OF COURT**

(Part 8 was in the October issue with map)

I continue my grand tour of churches of the City of London, now in its 5th year.

Not far south of Ely Place are two churches which are neighbours on opposite sides of Shoe Lane where it passes under Holborn Viaduct. Both are on the south side of the viaduct. The one on the east, **THE CITY TEMPLE**, has an entrance at Shoe Lane level as well as one at viaduct level, a storey higher up. Both entrances are inaccessible at present, however, because of building work. This is a United Reformed Church, which should not be confused with the Temple Church which I came to later.

The one on the west side of Shoe Lane, **ST ANDREW'S HOLBORN**, is built on a level plot higher up than Shoe Street but lower than Holborn viaduct. It can only be reached from the viaduct, by some steps down. Its site was the top of the hill before Holborn Viaduct was built in the 1860s. It stands out boldly, a white church with a white flat-topped tower. It is a Guild Church, meaning that it does not have a geographical parish, but is used for other purposes of the Diocese of London. It is still used regularly for services. It used to have a parish, now divided between St Alban's (see October edition) and St Bride's Fleet Street.

The interior is pleasantly light due to features similar to St Alban the Martyr's. Here, though, there are galleries on three sides, which divide the north and south windows into two ranks. There is a lot of gilding enhancing the white walls. As in St Albans the floor is tiled in cream, this time decorated with a scattering of very small black squares. A very convenient feature of the pews is a hymnbook shelf under every seat, accessible from the row behind.

The east window is stained glass depicting the Last Supper, but obscured by a very large flat cross suspended in front of it. On this is painted the crucifixion. There is an organ in the west gallery. This church is open from 9am to 5pm, longer than most other City churches. Mass is said at 12.30pm every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

A longer walk to the south down Fetter Lane brought us to Fleet Street close to the church of **ST DUNSTAN'S-IN-THE-WEST**, another Guild Church. It had closed at 3 o'clock so I was too late to go in. The street was reverberating with a peal of eight bells which could, after some difficulty, be located as coming from St Dunstan's tower right above, so the ringers were in. It is a square tower fronting the street, with an open-work "lantern" at the top. The peal was still being rung when I passed back this way about an hour-and-a half later. It would be worth returning one day

when the church is open as I have read about some interesting features. It is octagonal in shape with the altar in the north instead of the east.

My last church of the day was the **TEMPLE CHURCH**. This is the Collegiate Chapel of the Inner and Middle Temples of the Inns of Court, the most curious and one of the most handsome interiors I have visited. It stays open later than most, the last visitors being admitted at 4.45pm leaving plenty of time to look round. There is an admission fee of £5 but it is worth paying.

The only access from Fleet Street is the narrow Inner Temple Lane, which has a gated entrance on the south side of the street, but the gate stood open. The lane opens into a courtyard from which the west end of the church appears as a circular drum fully as wide as the rectangular eastern portion of the church. On top of it sits a smaller concentric drum or squat tower with a castellated top. The two have matching windows and the upper level is open to the lower level on the inside.

The names of the two parts of the church need explaining. The circular part was originally built as the nave, dating back to the twelfth century, and is now called THE ROUND. The rectangular part is called THE CHOIR but looks like a nave because this is where the seating is. Internally there is no partition between the two.

Although there is a large square porch at the west end of the Round, the normal entrance is through a porch at the south side of the division, and you immediately see fine polished black Purbeck marble columns. To the left, six of these in a circle hold up the hollow upper part of the Round. To the right an arcade of four on each side lead up to the altar. All these columns are shafted, each column being constructed of four cylinders packed together. These in turn are of mixed diameters.

The Round has eight tall windows, four being stained glass and the rest plain. Above the west door is a rose window. All round the wall is blank arcading up to window cill level with a grotesque head in every twin spandrel. At the foot of the wall is a continuous curved seat all round. There are no other seats in the Round. Indeed, there is scarcely room for any as the space is occupied by tombs and heavy stone effigies of near life-size knights lying full length on the floor. These date from the time of the Magna Carta with which they are associated.

Turning to the Choir, this is where the congregation sit, on inward-facing pews. These are of light modern style, being two rows on the inner side of each colonnade and five rows in the aisles and between the columns. At its head each black column sprouts into gilded delicate fan vaulting. The ceiling is in a buff tone. The light brown furnishings make a very tasteful contrast to the black marble. Halfway along is an organ on a small gallery on the left, but the larger pipes spread out wider than the gallery and can be seen behind arches in the wall. Above the console is the

coat of arms of the present-day sovereigns. The organ, dating from 1926, was a gift from Glen Tanar House in Scotland and was dedicated here in a service attended by the Queen. The pews level with the organ are raised a little to accommodate the actual choir.

At the east end is a carved wooden Christopher Wren reredos inscribed with the frequently used texts of the Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments and Creed. As you would expect in any Wren restoration there is no chancel screen, and the sanctuary is quite shallow. Above the reredos is a pictorial stained-glass window from the post-war restoration, a gift from the Glaziers' Company. Some of the shattered mediaeval glass was incorporated to add to its brilliance. With the reflected summer sunshine outside the window sparkled with red, blue and white in particular. The details include Jesus casting out the merchants from the Temple in Jerusalem and a scene from the London blitz.

There is a large courtyard outside the church on the south side, with a tall column surmounted by a bronze statue of two knights on one horse.

Services are held during the season of the Legal Year, from October to July. All are from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer: 8:30 Said Holy Communion and 11:15 Choral Mattins or Communion on Sundays; Choral Evensong on Wednesdays; 1:15pm Holy Communion on Thursdays.

There are also lunchtime organ recitals on Wednesdays at 1:15.

I have now visited, or at least looked at, 43 City of London churches. There are only about six more that I should be able to visit, and I hope to go back to some of the previous ones for a better look.

*John Leonhardt*



### **Travelling Crib**

Mary, Joseph and the donkey will be travelling around the village during December. Would you like to host them for the night? This is open to everyone in the village. Please let Debbie McMorran know on email:

[travelling-crib@littlegaddesdenchurch.org.uk](mailto:travelling-crib@littlegaddesdenchurch.org.uk) if you would like to take them in. Many thanks.

# CHILDREN'S PAGE

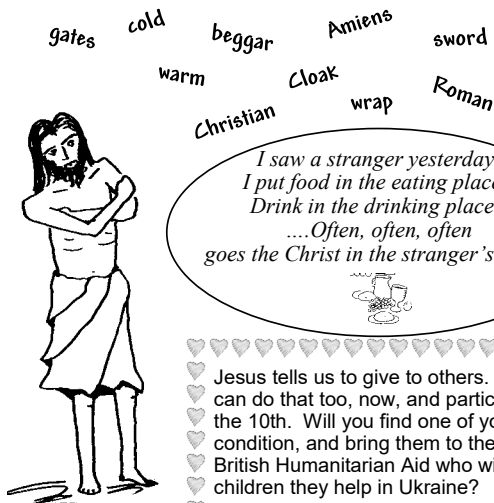
November the 11th is a special day. To find out what it is called take every third letter in the word below:

TOMWIASPROUTCHIBONURMPRATES

Martin was a R\_\_\_\_\_ soldier in France. He lived 1,650 years ago! Although he was a Roman soldier, he was also a C\_\_\_\_\_.

In about AD336, he was stationed in a city called A\_\_\_\_\_, in France. It was winter time and very cold. He had his uniform and a big, thick c\_\_\_\_ on to keep him w\_\_\_\_\_.

One night he was going through the city g\_\_\_\_\_ when he saw a b\_\_\_\_\_ by the walls. He was thin, dressed only in rags and was shivering with c\_\_\_\_. Martin looked at him and felt very sorry for him. He thought for a moment then took off his big, thick, warm cloak and cut it in half with his s\_\_\_\_, giving half to the beggar to w\_\_\_\_\_ himself in.



*I saw a stranger yesterday,  
I put food in the eating place -  
Drink in the drinking place -  
....Often, often, often  
goes the Christ in the stranger's guise.*



This little poem is taken from the Gaelic Rune of Hospitality. 'Guise' is short for disguise and means Christ is in everyone, especially strangers.

Jesus tells us to give to others. Martin was a wonderful example. We can do that too, now, and particularly at the Gift Service on December the 10th. Will you find one of your toys, or some warm clothes in good condition, and bring them to the service to give to Philip Edmonds from British Humanitarian Aid who will be coming to collect items to give the children they help in Ukraine?

## **British Humanitarian Aid**

Our parish first began its association with the British Humanitarian Aid charity some 30+ years ago following an address given by Tony Budell describing his 'calling' to devote his life to providing aid to those in need in the Ukraine. Over time we have supported the BHA by holding sales, arranging collections of household items and through monetary donations. In the early days, our point of contact was Tony Budell, the principal founder of the charity who worked tirelessly both in this country and the Ukraine. Following the Chernobyl disaster Tony suffered significant health problems and it was then that we became acquainted with others at the BHA, including Tony's wife Valerie and Philip Edmonds.

In recent times our main point of contact has been Philip, who has collected van-loads of 'goods' from our church and kept us informed of the problems in the Ukraine and the tremendous impact of our giving.

During the last few years there has been ever increasing hardship within the Ukraine, firstly the effects of Covid and associated restrictions and of course the continual attacks from Russia. In spite of this, the British Humanitarian Aid has continued to seek help and supply the necessary items to the areas with specific needs.

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Tony Budell during the summer and we were uncertain of the Charity's long-term viability. However, Philip Edmonds has assured us that, in the short-term at least, the charity's future is secure and continuing to ship essential items to the areas in need.

To bring things up-to-date, please make a note in your diary of the annual Gift Service to take place at the 9.00am communion Service on 10<sup>th</sup> December; Philip will be joining us and will be bringing his van to load up our gifts as usual. Once we hear from Philip with regard to what items are most needed, we will communicate a list and details of when and where to leave them.

Ian & Pat Catchpole



**BRITISH HUMANITARIAN AID (BHA)**

**GIFT SERVICE**

**SUNDAY 10<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER**

**AT 9.00am**

**Followed by Advent Breakfast. Delicious produce  
including croissants, bread, preserves,  
tea and coffee**

**EVERYONE WELCOME**

**Little Gaddesden Art Club**

# **ONE DAY ART SALE**

**Paintings, Folios, Pottery  
and Cards**

**SATURDAY, 11<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER**

**10.30am to 4pm**

**LITTLE GADDESSEN**

**VILLAGE HALL**

**Refreshments & light lunches**

**All welcome**

## **I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S NOT SUMMER!**

So, let's have a round-up of the summer: first off, I have a theory about why the old sycamore by Hadrian's Wall was felled. Think about it; sycamores, along with ash are quite promiscuous invaders, spreading seed via the helicopter seed pods blown by the autumn winds. Where ground is cultivated, they get their long tap root in place and are difficult to remove, in very short order. They soon colonise an area with thin woody weeds which prevent anything else from growing and provide little for wildlife. I suspect that someone living not a million miles away is plagued by the skinny invaders. It's doubtful whether they would colonise around the tree as the ground is hard and well-trodden. I rest my case!

The late flowering summer which made September and early October such a pleasure and stocking us up with vitamin D and, given that is how we get most of it, was much needed. I have learnt that a way of getting a little more is to leave mushrooms on a sunny windowsill for 30 minutes. Apparently they actually store it, therefore augmenting our supply. The thought has often occurred to me that in winter only your face may be exposed, meaning that with the regulation factor 15 on, it must mean that none is absorbed. Vitamin D (3) is recommended by NICE as a winter supplement for all (you heard it here second).

The bonus summer also encouraged flowers to keep blooming and brought out butterflies. It's been a good year for the spectacular Red Admiral and I was seeing them well into October. Most notably, the absolute profusion of hedgerow berries was breathtaking, especially with the sun lighting up the amazing displays. I just cannot go along with the popular saying, "Lots of berries, a sign of a cold winter". I mean, duh!, how do they know, in last year's winter and during spring? If that was the case, they would be employed by the meteorological office. No, it surely is due to all the rain which gave the roots a jolly good soaking. I even heard of an allotmenteer who planted his spuds out early in March (as any grimy old gardener will tell you, Never before Good Friday!). Anyway, this optimist's first earlies actually rotted in the ground.

Some things stay the same, it seems. It was an unwanted reminder of things to come when the robins started to sing their plaintive, sad song during September's lovely warm days. It shows that he is programmed to start claiming his winter territory, regardless of the balmy days. I cannot say that



it was a welcome reminder. Keep your territorial ambitions for later, pushy robin! Although the song has a gentle sound, redolent perhaps, of Samuel Barber's heartbreaking Adagio for Strings, he is actually belting out, "Get Outta My Face".

It's interesting how birds learn new tricks. Robins and chaffinches, both predominately ground feeders have learned to use the hanging feeders and I have even heard of a pied wagtail feeding on one. I have noticed that they will come into the garden to feed when it's very cold and that they are shocking bullies. Recently, two collar doves have been trying to get onto The Great-tittery, the bird table presented to me upon the occasion of my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday by WI friends. It's taken them ages to make it onto the table, (the doves that is, not, of course the WI) manoeuvring under the roof where they are stumped by being unable to hang onto the feeders. Sounds like a good idea not to get the whopping ones. Anyway, it has been a treat to have autumn pushed back for a while and there's the autumn spectacular to look forward to.

Josie Jeffrey

### ***From the Registers:***

September:

30 <sup>th</sup>	Holy Matrimony	Benjamin Iles and Stars Newis
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October:

1 <sup>st</sup>	Holy Baptism	Sophie Elizabeth Mary McKee
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7 <sup>th</sup>	Burial of Ashes	Janet Ann Rogers Nicholas Redding
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## **The Ark of the Covenant**

(continued from October 2023's issue)

In October's article, I mentioned that the Ark of the Covenant had been taken by some of the priests who accompanied Menelik on his return to Ethiopia. Historians and scholars are united in their belief that the account of this particular event, written in the 14<sup>th</sup> century manuscript of the *Kibre Negast*, is the work of imaginative fiction - a fairy tale. There is considerable academic consensus for a very different story of what happened to the Ark.

A recorded interview in the late 1980s with a priest on the island of Tana Kirkos (in Lake Tana in Northern Ethiopia) stated categorically that the relic had been concealed in a church on the island for 800yrs. It was then transferred to Axum, at the time of Ethiopia's conversion to Christianity in around 330AD. The implication of this statement is that the Ark must have arrived in Ethiopia in about 470BC, or about 500yrs after Solomon, Menelik and the Queen of Sheba. If one is to believe the priest's words, how and when did the Ark leave Jerusalem and where was it before arriving in Ethiopia?

Considerable research and examination of Old Testament and other biblical texts have led a number of scholars to identify the reign of Manasseh (687-642BC) as the likely period when the Ark left Jerusalem. The modern Jerusalem Bible describes how Manasseh had introduced an idol into the Holy of Holies of the Temple and, by so doing, had gone back to paganism. The most likely scenario, therefore, is that Manasseh ordered the Levites to remove the Ark before installing his idol (a carved image of Asherah). Manasseh did not live much longer after the idol's introduction into the Temple and his son, Amon, who succeeded him, served his father's idols but was slain by his servants after a reign of only 2yrs. Josiah, the 8-year-old son of Amon, succeeded him and, in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, launched a fierce campaign to remove all carved and molten images from his kingdom. Shortly afterwards the Levites were asked to restore the Ark in its rightful place in the restored Temple, but they were unable to comply with this order. At this time, relations between Judah and Egypt had reached an all-time low, so much so that Josiah was killed fighting the Egyptians. Even if he had known that the Ark had been taken to Elephantine Island, he would not have been in a position to enforce its return from a powerful country with which he was at war.

There is a great deal of probability, therefore, that the Ark had already been taken to Egypt, to Elephantine Island near Aswan, a few years earlier. As it so happens, a Temple had been built around the mid-late 7<sup>th</sup> century BC on Elephantine Island and, even though no remains of the Temple exist today, deciphered papyri from the area state that there was a building of considerable size whose dimensions were exactly the same as Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem (in modern terms, 90ft x 30ft). A number of other papyri speak of Yahweh actually 'residing' in the Temple which is a phrase used by the ancient Israelites for wherever the Ark was. In 525BC, the ruler of Persia, Cambyses, invaded Egypt and destroyed many temples of the gods of Egypt but did not damage the Jewish Temple on Elephantine Island. The Persians remained in power in Egypt until close to the end of the fifth century BC and, all during this time, the Jews co-operated closely with them. The Egyptians saw that only the Jewish Temple was not destroyed and, suspecting that they were on the side of the invader, the Jews were forced to flee from Elephantine Island as their Temple was being destroyed.

There are now 3 separate groups of Jews and Jewish priests: the main group in Israel, the second group on Elephantine Island and the third group in the Abyssinian Highlands that accompanied Menelik back from Jerusalem in about 950BC. Communications and trade-links had existed between the 3 groups for a number of centuries so where were the Elephantine Jews going to migrate to with the Ark after they left the island? It might have been obvious to the island priests that they should return to Jerusalem but they were very much aware that Solomon's Temple had long gone and that the new Temple was administered by a new priesthood, who would not welcome competition from the Elephantine Jews. Additionally, religious thinking in Jerusalem had moved on from where God was no longer thought of as the quasi-corporal deity, who dwelt 'between cherubim'. Clearly, they could not remain in Egypt- the Egyptians having already turned against them on the island - nor could they feel safe going out of the country to the north. The Elephantine Jews and Priests were left with only one real choice: go south, to Ethiopia, to the land in which their co-religionists had already established a secure foothold and where they would definitely be made very welcome.

In the previous issue, a Jewish Temple had been constructed on Elephantine Island, near Aswan, in the mid-late 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. Senior Falasha priests in Israel (some of whom had been airlifted out of Ethiopia in the 1980s),

Orthodox Christian priests in Ethiopia and learned historians firmly believe that the Elephantine Jews fled south to Ethiopia in the 5th. century BC.

The route from the Island to Ethiopia had been used by many migrants over the centuries. Herodotus, considered by many to be the 'Father of History', reported the following: "Four days' journey beyond Elephantine, the Nile ceases to be navigable. Forty days travel along the river's bank allow people to sail again for a further 12 days and reach the great city of Meroe, the 'Mother of all Ethiopia'. Sailing from Meroe, you will come to the land of the Deserters – 240,000 Egyptians who revolted from their armies and who had joined the Ethiopians in the time of Pharaoh Psammetchus (595-589BC). Adding all travelling together, it takes 4 months of journeying from Elephantine to the Deserters' land". If they'd journeyed on the Atbara river, which flows from the Nile north of Meroe, followed by the Tekeze river, travellers would be inside the modern borders of Ethiopia and possibly as far as Lake Tana. The Abyssinian mountains would have been an attractive destination compared with the deserts of Sudan and Egypt; the cool and well-watered mountains would have been like a Garden of Eden.

But, as I've mentioned in earlier issues, the fleeing people from Elephantine Island were travelling south to a 'known country' where they already had kin and co-religionists, who had ventured into Abyssinia for many centuries before the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Biblical references of this land are very evident: Ethiopia is a Greek word meaning 'burnt faces'; in the earliest Greek editions of the Bible, the Hebrew term 'Cush' was translated as 'Ethiopia' and was used to refer to the entire Nile valley south of Egypt, including Nubia and Abyssinia. There are many other biblical references: in the book of Numbers, reference is made to Moses having married an 'Ethiopian woman'; a passage in Psalm 68 makes a cryptic reference to the Ark of the Covenant in a prediction that 'Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God', and so a likely candidate for conversion to the religion of Israel; the prophet Amos also indicated that the children of Ethiopia should be regarded as being on a par with the 'chosen people of Israel'. All these, and many other writings, undeniably indicate that the only other land to have adopted the Judaic faith lay in the vicinity of Lake Tana, the Falasha homeland.

And so it was, in all probability, that the sacred relic of the Ark of the Covenant arrived in Northern Ethiopia, to Lake Tana. All Ethiopian Orthodox Christian priests, and some historians, believe that the Ark was taken to Tana Kirkos, near to Lake Tana's eastern shore for safe keeping. No building was erected for the Ark but it was placed in a tent, just as it was when the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness during Moses' time. The priests were also superstitious about building another temple for the Ark, after the demolition of the Temples in Jerusalem and on Elephantine Island by foreign forces. Sacrifices were performed in the open, just as the Israelites had done until Josiah (640-609BC) banned all sacrifices. To this day, 3 stone pillars of about 1 metre in height, can be seen on a high point of Tana Kirkos. The central pillar is hollowed out to a depth of about 4 inches and was used to contain blood from the sacrifice that was then scattered over the nearby tent containing the Ark. This practice is very similar to that which was carried out by the High Priest within Solomon's Temple, as described in the Mishnan— a compilation in written form of early oral Jewish Law.



Is the Ark still on Tana Kirkos?  
(to be continued in December 2023's issue)

Mike Walsham

### **MUSIC IN THE LIFE OF JOHN RUSSELL**

On Monday, 9th October, a large number of parishioners gathered to hear our Vicar be interviewed by Roger Bolton and play some of his favourite music. So many attended that we had to move from the Thomas Field Hall into the church.

We learned about John's fascinating early career as a maker and repairer of violins, his early years as a percussionist and violinist in a number of Hertfordshire orchestras, his penchant for fast cars, and his inability to dance, something which his wife Karen eagerly confirmed, her feet never having entirely recovered from partnering him.

There was some serious theology as well. John was supposed to choose 8 records but, in the end, chose 12, deliberately not choosing church music, which he loves. Perhaps another time.. Several of those attending, and those who could not, wished to have a list of his choices.

Here they are:

1. Vivaldi: Gloria in D
2. Beethoven: Symphony no 3 in E flat
3. Weber: Concertino for Clarinet and Orchestra
4. Saint-Saens : Violin Concerto - 3rd movement
5. Laloux: Tantum Ergo
6. Rachmaninov: Prelude no 5
7. Gardei: Per Una Carbera
8. Bernstein: Overture to Candide
9. Simon and Garfunkel 'My Little Town'
10. Rutter: Beatles Concerto 2nd Movement
11. Sinatra: 'It was a very good year'.
12. Nat King Cole : 'Let there be Love'.

### **WHAT'S THE POINT OF BAPTISM?**

The Wednesday discussion group usually meets on-line, but on  
WEDNESDAY 1st NOVEMBER, at 7.30pm  
they will be meeting in the Thomas Field Hall  
to discuss baptism.

We will look at the history of baptism, its biblical foundation, and ask,  
is it really necessary today?

**ALL PEOPLE AND ALL VIEWS, WELCOME!**  
**REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED**

## PRAYER PAGE

### **For those who have died on active service**

O God of truth and justice,  
we hold before you those men and women  
who have died in active service:  
in Iraq, in Afghanistan and elsewhere.  
As we honour their courage and cherish their memory,  
may we put our faith in your future;  
for you are the source of life and hope,  
now and for ever.

**Amen**

### **A Prayer that we may live peaceably**

O God, all holy one, you are our Mother and our Father  
and we are your children.  
Open our eyes and our hearts that we may discern your work  
and see your features in every one of your children.  
May we know that you want us to care for one another  
as those who know that they are sisters and brothers,  
members of the same family.  
Help us to live in harmony, wiping away the tears from the eyes  
of those who are less fortunate than ourselves.  
And may we know war no more,  
as we strive to be what you want us to be:  
your children.

**Amen**

*Archbishop Desmond Tutu, adapted*

May He support us all the day long,  
till the shades lengthen and the evening comes,  
and the busy world is hushed and the fever of life is over  
and our work is done.  
Then in His mercy  
may he give us a safe lodging  
and a holy rest and peace at the last.

**Amen**

## CHURCH SERVICES – NOVEMBER

<b>I Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November – All Saints</b>		
9am	Parish Communion	Little Gaddesden
11am	Parish Communion	Great Gaddesden
6pm	Evensong	Nettleden
<b>II Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November – Remembrance</b>		
9am	Morning Prayer with service of Remembrance	Nettleden
9am	Said Holy Communion	Little Gaddesden
10.45am	Procession from the village hall to the War Memorial for service of Remembrance	Little Gaddesden
10.50am	Service of Remembrance	Great Gaddesden
<b>III Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday before Advent</b>		
9am	Parish Communion	Little Gaddesden
11am	Parish Communion	Great Gaddesden
6pm	Evensong	Nettleden
<b>IV Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November – Christ the King</b>		
9am	Morning Prayer	Nettleden
9am	Parish Communion	Little Gaddesden
11am	Parish Communion	Great Gaddesden
<b>I Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December – Advent Sunday</b>		
9am	Parish Communion	Little Gaddesden
11am	Parish Communion	Great Gaddesden
6pm	Evensong	Nettleden
6pm	Advent Service of Light	Little Gaddesden

<b>Mid-Week Services</b>		
Tuesdays	9am Holy Communion	Great Gaddesden
Thursdays	10am Holy Communion	Little Gaddesden

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**Deadline Date: Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November**