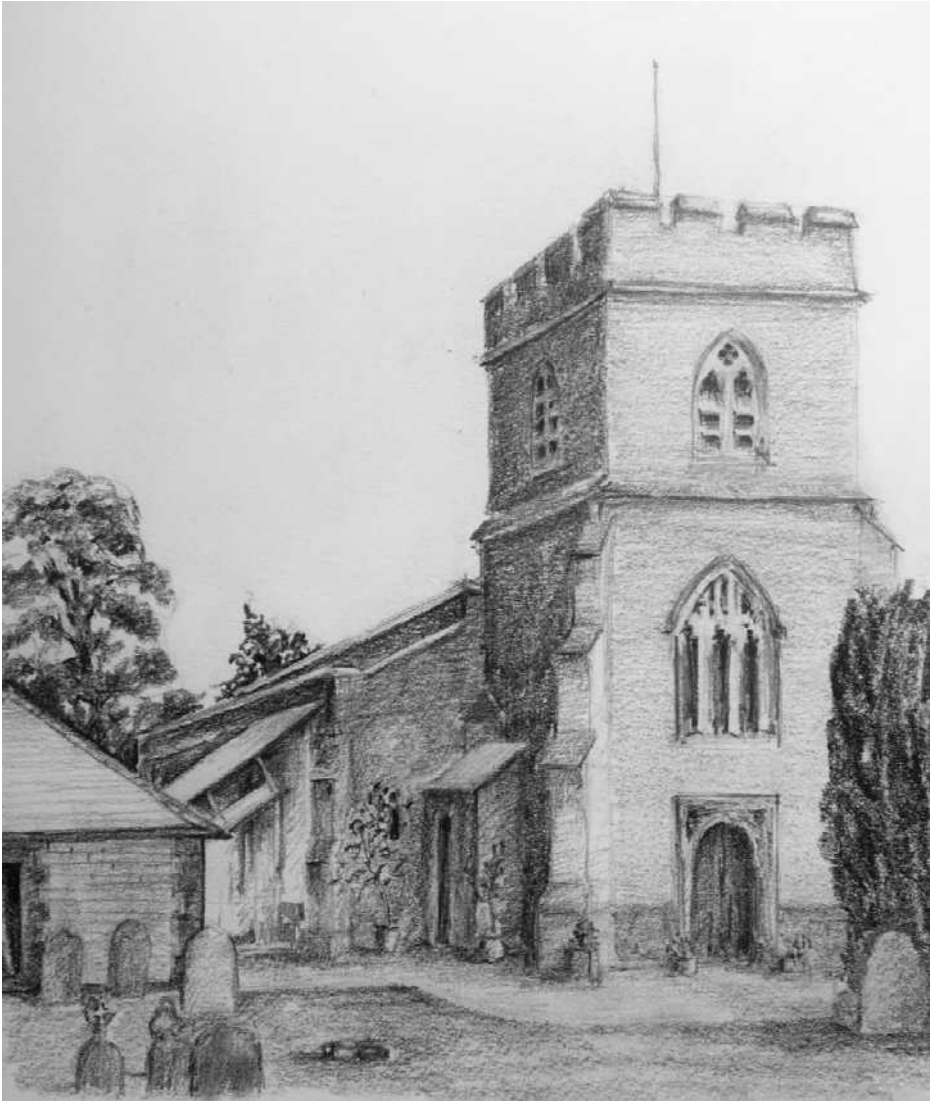


Parish News

St Peter and St Paul, Little Gaddesden

£1.00

April 2024



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 843220

READERS: Anthony Archer 842397

Heather Tisbury 01582 842807

PCC OFFICERS: Treasurer: Allan Webster 843157

Secretary: Barbara Sheard 843591

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 (2nd Sunday)

6.00pm Evensong at Nettleden on the 1st and 3rd Sunday
of the month

6.00pm Occasional Iona or Taizé services

5th 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 47 No.04

Dear Friends,

I must confess that I own an Easter Bunny outfit – something you probably didn't need to know! My performances as Easter Bunny, have been mixed to say the least; on the first occasion, a child soon worked out that I was inside the outfit and she kept coming up to me, saying, *'I know who you are! You're the Vicar! You're not the Easter bunny!'* – she was very persistent! Chastened, I gave up for years, but rarely daunted, more recently I tried again; at the Vicarage, this time for my grandchildren, that didn't work either – the children were scared stiff and I had to reveal myself to avoid nightmares or scarring for life!

To gain any sort of understanding of the events of Easter 2000 years ago; as to what happened on the first day of the week in that garden, you have to know what came before, otherwise it's difficult to even begin to understand the enormity of what took place. Indeed, it could take more than a lifetime delving into consequences of those fateful days and the transformation offered, to understand something that, even to this day, is still not accepted by so many of the world Jesus came to save.

If it's that hard for adults to understand, how much harder and confusing for children, what with Easter bunnies and chocolate eggs? Making the connection with torture, agonising death, followed by rebirth three days later and the fact that it all has something to do with Jesus the man 2000 years ago, and add in lots of stories, half known, half remembered from the bible, makes the joining of the dots very difficult.

Coming up to the 25th December each year, we talk of 'the real message of Christmas', but perhaps even more important is to try to understand the reality and message of Easter? It is about new life in this life, the here and now. We may talk about the life hereafter - life beyond the grave - but the message of Easter is that new life in faith brought about by the resurrection of Jesus, is available right now.

There is no doubt that Easter is a cause for great celebration, but it isn't overshadowed by the sort of present orgy which consumes the meaning of Christmas. I'm sure Easter egg makers are on to a winner, because there's very little chocolate in an Easter egg and they sell an awful lot of them - I bet

the packaging is more expensive - but they send a subliminal message which we can cash in on, doing the church a bit of a favour!

What is the perfect Easter egg? It needs to be empty, it can be made of your favourite chocolate, but it doesn't need any goodies inside, so that eating it becomes the perfect symbol of Jesus bursting out of the tomb. It's an ideal teaching aid for children and for us too, as we tuck into our Easter eggs. Of course, another subliminal message could be a box of Celebrations!

However you measure when Lent ends, Easter Day brings the end of the Lenten fast and it certainly is the time to celebrate; above all, to give thanks to God for the great undeserved gift he has given to us in his Son, Jesus Christ, who is indeed the Saviour of the World – all we need to do is encourage the world to recognise it.

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Allelujah!

I am yours in Christ,
John.

Phrank the Phoolish Pheasant

He's been around phor several days,
hoping to phind a lady phriend,

And I'm phingers crossed
that he won't meet a phrightphul pheasant's end.

Does he follow Phearless Phil, and Phlorien,
from many moons bephore,
who thought to run away, not phlutter up then get phelled
by a sharp 12 bore?

But, dear Phrank, just think as you belt helter-skelter
along the Chiltern Way,
Just phly over that phence, don't chance that road,
and live to phly another day.

Josie Jeffrey

CITY CHURCHES - Part 10, walked in FEBRUARY 2024
NORTH OF THE BANK OF ENGLAND
(Parts 8 & 9 were in the October and November 2023 issues)

This walk was on a Monday and began with **ST MARGARET'S LOTHBURY**. Lothbury is a road which runs alongside the blank north wall of the Bank of England. St Margaret's is opposite, half-way along. Its street level façade connects to the adjoining secular buildings at both ends, but this is the south wall of the church and has three tall windows. There is a small entrance at the west corner, beneath a square tower with a narrow spire.

On entering the church, I first met a calm and kindly gentleman who had just arranged a set of wine glasses on a small table at the west end for a meeting due that evening. He welcomed me to look around. It is a fairly small church.

The nave immediately impresses the visitor with its consistently black wooden furnishings and red pew cushions, kneelers and central carpet. I was instantly aware of the amount of decorative carving, not truly black but very dark brown oak. Drawing the eye upwards there was an elaborate sounding board above the comparatively low pulpit. A sounding board is usually a flat horizontal projection some way above the preacher's head, tidily bordered, but this one had been used by the carver as a base for some lively work rising from the top.

There is clearly much more for the eye to explore. If you look straight down the aisle, you can see the very traditional altar reredos composed of three panels of texts – the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed. They are in gilded lettering on black, with gilt borders and more elaborate carved surrounds. There is a full width Choir Screen, but with so much open space in it that it is more like a picture window than a screen. The top beam rises into a split arch in the centre of which is a carving of the royal coat of arms of the William and Mary period. Below it hangs a large eagle. All this is of the same dark oak. The sides of the screen are divided and closed by ten very slender upright double helical "pillars". These are carved like twin corkscrews wound each other, but without touching. The rail round the altar also stands on smaller versions of these. On either side of the reredos are two paintings where east windows had been: Moses on the left and Aaron on the right. These came from the church of St Christopher le Stocks, Threadneedle Street, which was demolished in 1781, and whose parish was united with St Margaret's.

The south aisle (on the right) is a Lady Chapel separated from the nave by a two-tier balustrade with a doorway near each end, providing more

opportunities for the carver's art. The bottom tier consists of right-handed spiral balusters, and the upper tier of metal with gilded left-handed twists. In the chapel is a small altar backed by a large diptych of the Annunciation. The spoken words of the Archangel and Mary are in Latin texts beneath. Above the diptych is the tetragrammaton of the name of God JHWH in Hebrew script.

I must add that the north and south windows show brightly coloured armorial bearings surrounded by clear glass. There is a west gallery with an organ, but no side galleries. There is a clerestory of ten circular windows. There are elaborate brass electric chandeliers.

The church is host to frequent organ and choir recitals and talks, and holds a weekday lunchtime service.

FIRES, BOMBS AND RESTORATIONS

St Margaret's Lothbury and St Lawrence Jewry (coming up next), both dating from the 12th century or earlier, were both destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666. St Margaret's had been rebuilt in the 15th century. Sir Christopher Wren rebuilt both in his new style of uninterrupted space, firstly St Lawrence, then St Margaret's. Meanwhile the nearby St Mary Magdalene Milk Street, also burnt, was not restored, but its Parish united with St Lawrence.

St Margaret's escaped the World War II bombing, thus becoming one of the best surviving examples of an original Wren Church. St Lawrence's, however, was burnt out by an incendiary bomb in 1940. It was restored to Wren's original design and re-opened in 1957.

My third church of today's journey, St Mary Moorfields, looks modern, probably post-1945 though I don't know its history. Its site is also well beyond the extent of the 1666 fire, and just outside the modern City boundary.

THE CITY LIVERY COMPANIES

St Lawrence's has close associations with 14 livery companies including the Girdlers, the Actuaries, the Haberdashers, the Mercers and the Loriners. It is also the central church of the whole Livery Movement. St Margaret's is the home church of five: the Armourers and Brasiers, the Glovers, the Tylers and Bricklayers, the Tin Plate Workers alias Wire Workers and the Scientific Instrument Makers. I was surprised to read that there are now 109 livery companies in London, all being philanthropic fellowships. Coats of Arms and other symbols of these are found in the churches they have supported and adopted.

My second church was **ST LAWRENCE JEWRY**. This is a large free-standing church in the precincts of the Guild Hall of the Corporation of the City of London in Gresham Street. It is the official church of that body, and therefore the place for various civic services. When the Lord Mayor of London is there in his official capacity he is preceded by a Sword Bearer and a Mace Bearer. There are special ornamental rests in which these symbols are placed during his presence.

Like St Margaret's Lothbury all the furnishings are dark oak and there is a chapel running alongside the nave, but on the north side. This is dedicated to the Commonwealth.

The reredos of the main altar is a simple painting of St Lawrence telling the Roman Emperor Valerian that the treasures of his church are the poor and sick. The two large east windows depict St Paul and St Catherine in painted glass. Nearly all the other windows show individual people set in decorative borders but still with plenty of clear glass around them. They are St George (in the Commonwealth Chapel), Thomas More, St Mary Magdalene, St Michael the Archangel, St Lawrence, Christopher Wren with his master carver Grinling Gibbons and his master mason Edward Strong, and William Grocyn a 16th century scholar and vicar of this church.

The Commonwealth Chapel can be seen through an open screen. It has many motifs with military associations including the Royal Marines and the Parachute Regiment, and windows designed in 1954 with details representing Australia, New Zealand, Malaya, India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Ghana and South Africa. Its East Window shows Christ Ascended. All the windows I have described were the work of Christopher Rahere Webb (born 1866).

There are two organs dating from 2000-2001 in casings mainly going back to 1957. The main one is in the west gallery, and a smaller one in the Chapel is linked to the main console but can be played independently.

Outside the west door of the church is a shallow pool with concrete blocks convenient for sitting. Here, as I sat to eat my lunch, a Yellow Wagtail walked close by me.

My third and last church was **ST MARY MOORFIELDS**, a Roman Catholic church just north of Finsbury Circus and just outside the current City boundary. It has a simple graceful interior in which a steady trickle of people came in and out to sit or kneel or pray. It was around four o'clock and didn't close until 6.30.

The nave of varnished pinewood pews with rolled tops is flanked by well-spaced pillars of black marble. At the east end, an arc of six grey fluted columns

leads your eyes to the painted carved crucifix at the centre of an apse. Below it the white altar table is supported on a dish-shaped block of carved stone. To the north side of the nave is a side aisle in which stand statuettes of St Joseph and St Christopher with stands for votive candles. This aisle leads up to a bright stained-glass window depicting the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven. On a small table below it is a veiled aumbry containing the reserved Blessed Sacrament. On either side of this window are wall paintings of Saint Thomas and Blessed Thomas More. On the adjoining wall forming the corner is a painting of the twelve Apostles, St Salome, St Mary Magdalene, St Susanna and St Joanna standing in informal attendance on St Mary the Virgin seated.

The north and south walls are set with the stations of the cross in plain grey stone bas-relief. Below this level the walls are panelled in mid-brown wood, and above it they are white leading up to a shallow barrelled ceiling with tinted clerestory windows which are about the only natural light entering the nave. The artificial light, however, is strong and effective. More votive candles are located before a painted statue of the Virgin Mary in the south-west corner. There is a small pipe organ in a west gallery.

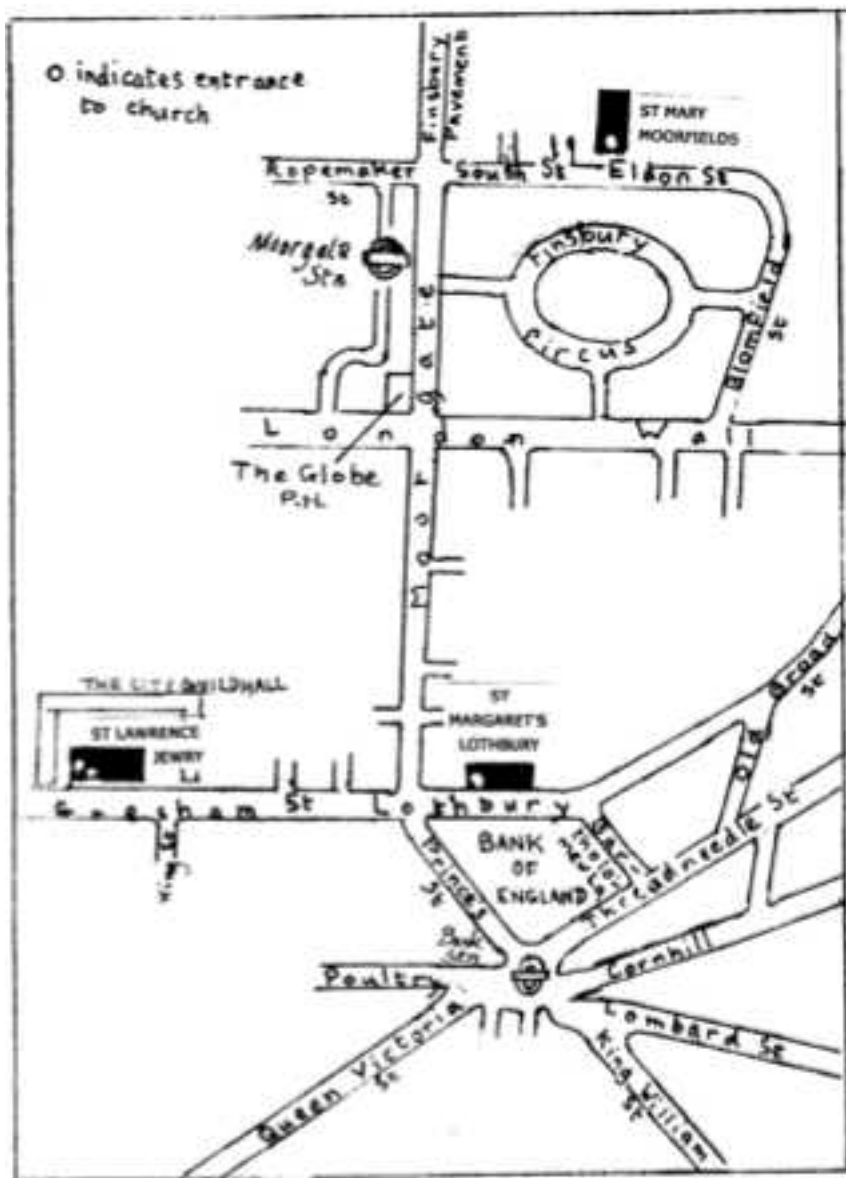
After leaving this church, I walked back south along Moorgate to a popular public house just beyond Moorgate station called the Globe. It celebrates the memory of the poet John Keats who lived in a previous tavern on this spot. I enjoyed a delicious sausage and mash dinner there and then returned home.

This may be my final instalment of this project begun in 2018. This completes my visits to the 42 churches listed in the City of London Section of Mervyn Blatch's Guide to London Churches, 1979, which includes the 40 listed in the latest short guide issued by the Friends of the City Churches. This organisation has also published a map showing 7 additional places of worship, of which I have visited four. The remaining three are a Welsh Presbyterian church, a German Lutheran church and a synagogue which I have no present plans to visit. A few of the churches which I visited were not open at the time, and these I would like to return to. A very few are not open to visitors anyway because of their current uses.

THE LOST LONDON CHURCHES PROJECT

This is something which I have just discovered. It is promoting interest in the former City churches which have been lost. The City once had 108 churches. The lost ones are about 9 with remains still to be seen such as walls or towers, about 34 not rebuilt after the 1666 fire, and 26 totally lost for other reasons. Many have left clues such as wall plaques or boundary markers. Details can be found at the website lostlcp.com. Collectible cards, books and maps have been issued.

- John Leonhardt



COUNTRYSIDE MATTERS.

Helpful hints for Newbies & Townies .

ONE: A. Grey squirrel. BAD. B. Red squirrel. GOOD. (Sadly you won't be seeing any of these anytime soon. See A.) A. Get rid: EG if you see one in the road, reflex action is to swerve to avoid it. Try not to (not easy).

MOLES. Probably biggest cause of 'lawn apoplexy'. On the bright side, old and wise gardeners welcome the fine seed free soil to use for potting. No problems coping with peat free! We tend not to notice when they stop having their little lawn jokes and make heaps on the veg plot, but I claim to have had a six lane mole highway (highway? ok. Supertunnel) beneath my potatoes. I suppose they do aerate the soil & provide nutrients.

Moles are notoriously difficult to get rid of, Mole-catchers are a vanishing breed and should be nurtured: lots of builder's tea and hobnobs should do it. Otherwise play something from radio two over the run. It will give itself up.

WALKING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE:. Lots of newbies/ townies invaded old footpaths during and since lockdown and took advantage of the fashion for expensive cross-breed dogs. (But why haven't I ever seen a rottpoo? Think about it; fantastic guard dog that won't leave annoying hairs all over your burglar).

Anyway: A narrow footpath means that it has been and should continue to be trod in single file, not trampled on by two or more abreast, sometimes plus pushchairs. Sadly, Ashridge woods hereabouts have no single track paths left now, or even paths in many places. This means (duh!) that the precious ancient specimens, wildflowers, herbs and fine grasses are trampled into the mud (there being a shortage of dust currently) which also eliminates the whole ecosystem thereabouts. Increasingly so much of what we are losing seems gone for ever.

Farmland is sometimes arable, sometimes grazing. (other categories are available, to be dealt with later). There are often footpath through grazing land as our countryside has developed over the centuries it has been largely formed by agriculture, stock farming, woodland and connecting old byways and paths which we are so fortunate to have the freedom to walk. Let's be grateful for it and respect it. However, that does not mean that free access is available everywhere. That is tresspass.

GRAZING ANIMALS. SHEEP. We are a country of dog lovers, one of the many nice things about us. However, that so does not mean that any dog should be allowed anywhere near grazing sheep which are gentle animals and will not retaliate when chased by cuddly little cockerpoos or loveable labradoodles whose instinct is to chase, whether it's into barbed wire fencing or across a busy road, the distress can cause a ewe to abort. Just don't let them do it. They won't want to come back when you call, instinct is taking over. Furthermore, more than one dog is a pack. However perfect as family pets they are, packs kill. It's just what they do, bred in them since before they were house-trainable. Afield with dead and otherwise savaged sheep is a sad and horrible sight.

CATTLE: A field of bullocks being fattened for market are curious and may walk your way and if you run, so will they. They don't mean you harm but accidents can occur in muddy fields. First, do stick to the path, keep the dog on the lead and carry on. However if there are cows and calves, keep well away. There is nothing fiercer or more dangerous than a protective cow-mum. They won't bite but they will charge and trample you into the mud. They can and do, kill. Should you pass such a family unit, and they are anywhere near, possibly coming your way, let the dog off the lead and run for it, it's the dog she is after as she sees that as the threat, the dog will always win the running race and both of you should get yourselves to the other side of the nearest fence.

BLUEBELLS. I have just seen a reprehensible newspaper article which reports a claim by a University of Sussex Professor that bluebells are a sign of damaged biodiversity as they take over areas of woodland. WHAT! They come from nowhere, delight the eye, the nose and the heart and disappear as the woodland canopy takes over. A problem is the invading Spanish bluebell which has bloom all around the sturdy, straight stem, unlike the nodding native. The pushy Spaniard also has no scent. My theory is they have grown from the hyacinths we plant out in the garden when they have finished indoors, they then go native. But not exactly. There's an easier way to get rid of our lovely native bluebell, just trample on it by not sticking to the single footpath, then rush across to a suitable spot and take a selfie. Unlike the enraged, protective cow, there's no charge. (Only joking!)

Josie Jeffrey

Berkhamsted Walk

Sunday 12th May 2024

Raising funds for The Children's Society

It is a painful fact that many children and young people in Britain today are still suffering extreme hardship, abuse and neglect. Help us to make a difference to the lives of these vulnerable young people. As little as £5 could pay for a hot meal for a child who has not eaten all day, or pay for a vulnerable young person to travel to a counselling session, giving them a safe place to talk.

Choose the walk that suits you and make the most of the springtime countryside:

The Fun Walk: 6 miles for all ages

The Bluebell Walk: 12 miles for beauty and fresh air

The Challenge Walk: 18 miles for the really hardy

All walks start from Kitchener's Field, Castle Hill, Berkhamsted, HP4 1HE, next to the Cricket Club. Walkers can start any time from 9.30am - 2pm.

Berkhamsted Walk – choose your distance and get involved

Easy to participate

- Independent walking at your own pace
- Different routes every year
- Regular checkpoints
- Clear walk signposting along the whole route
- Refreshments available at the checkpoints
- Get sponsored or make a donation
- Tea and cake provided at Kitchener's Field for returning walkers

Get involved

It's easy to participate in the walk – just visit www.berkhamstedwalk.com and register online. You can donate in advance of the walk by visiting our JustGiving page at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/berkhamsted-walk (link on our website).

We will have limited ability to take registrations and donations on the day, so online registration is preferable. The routes will be emailed to all participants who sign up and donate in advance.

For details and to register online: www.berkhamstedwalk.com

Annual Revision of the Electoral Roll

There was a complete revision of the church electoral roll in 2019, but we still need to check that the roll is up to date in time for our revised Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 5th May 2024.

We will be leaving a copy of the current roll on display in the church from Sunday 7th April to Monday 15th April and registration forms for new members will also be available in the church on the cross aisle. If you are already on the list, please take a moment to check that your details are correct. If you have changed your address since the last revision took place in April 2023, please let me know so I can update our records.

If you are not already listed and would like to join the roll, please consider the following requirements:

You should be baptised, aged 16 years or over and:

1. be a member of the Church of England or of a church in communion with it and
 - (a) you should live in the parishor
 - (b) if you live outside the parish you should be a regular member of the congregation at St Peter and St Paul
2. be a member in good standing of a church which is not in communion with the Church of England, but subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, also a member of the Church of England and a regular member of the congregation at St Peter and St Paul.

What is the significance of the Electoral Roll?

Members of the church are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the church. They can vote in elections at the Meeting of Parishioners and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

As ever, enrollment brings both rights and responsibilities. Members are expected to contribute to the stewardship of the church and its activities in the locality.

The size of the roll determines other aspects, such as the number of representatives at Deanery Synod. It also determines our financial share (contribution to costs at the Diocesan level). Essentially, the larger the roll, the more we pay. Nevertheless, we welcome all on the roll as a record of our active and contributing parishioners who are involved with the church and its mission.

The deadline for revisions is Monday 15th April. If you would like to discuss this further, please talk to John Russell, our churchwardens Terri Adams and Jane Dickson, or to me, the Electoral Roll Officer.

Annabelle Grassini, Electoral Roll Officer
electoral.roll@littlegaddesdenchurch.org.uk

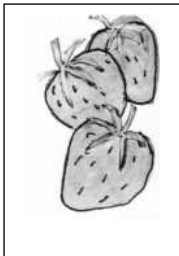
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 5th May 2024
in the Church

following on from the 9am service

All parishioners on the Electoral Roll are very welcome to attend this meeting to find out what has been happening during the last year and to ask questions of the Vicar, the Churchwardens and other members of the PCC.

PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGED DATE

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 12th - 18th May



This year we will again be supporting Christian Aid Week. Please save the date for our Strawberry Cream Tea in the TFH on Saturday 18th May.

We will also be raising funds for Christian Aid through an e-envelope and collections in Church.

From the Registers:

No entries this month

CHILDREN'S PAGE

Here is the story of **STEPHEN** who became a disciple after Jesus had gone into heaven.
(You can read about this in Acts chapter 6)

He made the Priests of the Jewish synagogue very angry when he told them that Jesus wanted them to live in a different way. Just following all the old rules and regulations was not enough.

The Priests wanted to stop Stephen telling the people about Jesus, because the people were not obeying them, but leaving their synagogues to follow Jesus. They summoned him to stand before them and accused him. "You are telling lies about the Temple and the Law of Moses," they said.

All those sitting in the Council fixed their eyes on Stephen and saw that his face looked like the face of an angel. "How stubborn you are," Stephen said, "you are the ones who received God's law, that was handed down by angels—yet you have not obeyed it!" As the members of the Council listened to Stephen, they became furious and ground their teeth at him in anger. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw God's glory and Jesus standing at the right-hand side of God. "Look!" he said, "I see heaven opened and the Son of Man standing at the right-hand side of God!"

With a loud cry the members of the Council covered their ears with their hands. Then they all rushed at him at once, threw him out of the city, and stoned him. The witnesses left their cloaks in the care of a young man named Saul. They kept on stoning Stephen as he called out to the Lord, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" He knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord! Do not hold this sin against them!" He said this and died. (Acts chapter 7)

WORDSEARCH

Find the words underlined in the story



Colour in the picture of Stephen being stoned.

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

**Address to the Unco Guid, or the Rigidly Righteous
Robert Burns (1759 – 96)**

My son, these maxims make a rule,
An' lump them ay thegither:
The Rigid Righteous is a fool,
The Rigid Wise anither;

The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
May hae some pyles o' caff in;
So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o' daffin.
Solomon. (Ecclesiastes vii. 16)

O ye, who are sae guid yoursel,
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neebours' fauts and folly,
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supplied wi' store o' water,
The heaped happer's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter!

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals
That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door
For glaikit Folly's portals:
I for their thoughtless, careless sakes
Would here propone defences -
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,
And shudder at the niffer:
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What makes the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasions gave;
That purity ye pride in;
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hidin.
Think, when your castigatid pulse
Gives now and then a wallop,

What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop!
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It makes an unco lee-way.

See Social-life and Glee sit down
All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transmugrify'd, they're grown
Debauchery and Drinking:
O, would they stay to calculate,
Th' eternal consequences,
Or – your more dreaded hell to state -
Damnation of expenses!

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
Tied up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
Suppose a change o' cases:
A dear-lov'd lad, convenience snug,
A treach'rous inclination -
But, let me whisper in your lug,
Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang,
To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving why they do it:
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis his alone
Decidedly can try us:
He knows each cord, its various tone,
Each spring, its various bias:
The at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted.

Robert Burns is one of my favourite poets and I'm rather embarrassed to have taken so long to put one of his poems in Parish News. He wasn't as well-behaved as one might hope but his heart was certainly in the right place – this poem is one of many that entertainingly tease those who are sanctimoniously good and take themselves too seriously. Not all of Burns' targets were men of the cloth but they're a well-represented profession.

Burns was just as capable of expressing himself in 'standard English' as in Lallans (lowlands), roughly the dialect of southern Scotland; he was as much the poet as the plough-boy and as with this one, most of his poems are somewhere between the two. Some of these words are pretty incomprehensible when seen in isolation, but in fact it's easy to understand the sense of most of his poetry when one reads it. Here are some of the more tricky words:

unco guid - uncommonly good; pyles o' caff - bits of chaff; daffin – fun; weel-gaun - well running; heapet happer - heaped hopper in the mill; douce – sober; glaikit – thoughtless; donsie – stupid; niffer – exchange; aft mair than a' the lave – often more than all the rest; aiblins – maybe; gang a kennin wrang – go a little wrong.

Nick Murray

CHURCH OPENING 1881

“August 2nd this year will always be remembered amongst us with feelings of thankfulness. The re- consecration of the chancel of our church was a great event”.

So began the report in the Little Gaddesden section of the Ivinghoe Deanery magazine for 1881. The Brownlows of Ashridge had to wait until the conservative minded Reverend David Jenks died, at the end of 1869, before they could get their own man, Charlton George Lane, in charge of the church, and set about updating the interiors.

Repairs to the nave were done first, which involved pulling down the choir gallery at the west end of the church next to the tower. Then, in the late 1870s, they set about reordering the chancel (while this was happening Holy Communion was celebrated at Ashridge Chapel).

Why were the changes made?

Charlton Lane said, “We can easily sympathise with those tender feelings which spring from old associations and memories of dear friends who are departed”, but he went on: “What we gain is of inestimable value compared with what we leave behind. As the houses of the rich and poor have become better furnished, and display a taste for what is pleasant to the eye, it is surely right and natural that the House of God should not be left uncared for. As our feeling for the better kind of music has grown, other parts of the service must also be lifted up and improved. We are sure that this increased care for outward things does lead to increased reverence in worship, and truer value for the spiritual part of the Prayers and Sacraments. It was hardly possible when the Choir was concealed in a dark gallery and stowed in a corner, away from the sight of the congregation, seated moreover, on uncomfortable benches, and not able to kneel during the prayers, that a proper reverence should exist. Neither was the dark place under the gallery likely to promote hearty responses or attentive ears”. (Elsewhere, the rector was quite rude about the inattentiveness of the choir, and the music they made).

In the Parish Annals, Charlton Lane had written: “Across the tower and stretching some way into the church was a capacious gallery for the singers and their friends. Here was a barrel organ which played curious old tunes of the florid order, embellished with turns and twists, soaring so high that

the ordinary village voice was unable to reach the highest pitch and at this point resembled the croaking of frogs”.

Charlton Lane also wrote of "great irreverence in the congregation". In the Deanery Magazine, Charlton Lane continued:

“All changes, both in the building and in the church Services, have been introduced with one simple motive - to improve the spiritual character of the worship”.

The Rector expressed “his deepest thanks to Lord Brownlow for his munificence in providing money for the restoration of the chancel. His Lordship has been in great measure architect of the new building. He has been as careful to preserve as much as possible of the old work. Most fortunate too, in having a clerk of works in Mr Wright, who threw his heart into the work, and most ably carried out the plans. We have to congratulate our neighbour, Mr Stanners, on his work in chancel roof and flooring. The beams of the roof were carved by William Temple from designs by Lord Brownlow, which represent the emblems of S.Peter and S.Paul, to whom the church is dedicated.”

In 1889 after the death of Lord Brownlow’s mother, Lady Marian Alford, a new Altar Cross was given in her memory and in 1893, following the death of Charlton Lane from pneumonia, the east end was redecorated in his memory. (One of the results of this was the removal of the all the monuments connected with the Bridgewaters from the chancel. The largest were placed either side of the north door which leads to the Thomas Field Hall, while the rest were placed in the chapel to the south east. The remains of the Egerton family members remain untouched in the vault under the altar.)

A few years earlier, in 1878, some early 16th century stained-glass from Germany was placed in a window in the north west corner of the church, to commemorate the rectorate work in the nave. The interior of our church today is much as it was when the re- consecration of 1881 took place. Over 140 years later it would be a brave rector who suggested such a radical makeover! Of course, when the present church was built, in around 1400, there would have been no pews in the nave, and, judging by the graffiti on some of the pillars, “great irreverence in the congregation’. Today, of course, we are all impeccably behaved.

ROGER BOLTON

The Ark of the Covenant
(continued from March 2024's issue)

The Templars were a rich and powerful brotherhood of religious warriors. Their assistance with the Lalibela churches was much appreciated, but the monarchy and priests suspected a hidden agenda: to snatch the Ark of the Covenant from Axum and take it to Europe at the earliest opportunity. Yekuno Amlak, the monarch in 1270, was very uneasy at having armed, militant foreigners in his country who could call on reinforcements from thousands of their order in the Near East. However, Yekuno's grandson, Emperor Wedem Ara'ad, sent a large, high-level delegation in 1306 to the recently crowned Pope in Avignon, to tell him of the Templars intentions. France, under King Philip IV, and the papacy of Clement V, were weak and already suspicious of the Templars' possible challenge to the secular and religious authorities. The delegation, having mentioned that the Ethiopian Templars might return to Europe with the Ark, made them even more nervous and unsettled. As a result, in 1307, many Templars in Europe (particularly France) were arrested, imprisoned, tortured and executed. News reached Ethiopia of the Inquisition and, secure in the knowledge that no more knights would be available to be sent, the Emperor wiped them out and he felt that the Ark was now safe.

In Europe, difficulties arose trying to capture the knights with some escaping to Scotland and Portugal. King Robert the Bruce of Scotland was in a bitter struggle with the English and he openly welcomed a contingent of knights to fight at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. In Portugal, the Templars were tried and found to be free of guilt, but as the Portuguese monarch, Dennis 1, was a good catholic, he paid lip service to the Papal instructions by officially dissolving the order in 1312. A few years later, a new order called the Order of Christ was born which, by all accounts, inherited all the property and funds of the previous order and operated in secrecy as a form of Freemasonry.

It wasn't until 1487 that King John II of Portugal sponsored a trusted aide to visit Ethiopia. The perilous journey took Pero de Covilhan 6yrs and, on his arrival at the emperor's court, was first welcomed, but then later placed under house arrest for suspicion, which had resulted from his enquiries about the sacred relic. He was detained in Ethiopia for the rest of his life. Communications were exchanged between Ethiopia and Portugal over the years and, with the improvement of understanding, Emperor Lebna Dengel invited Portugal to establish an embassy in 1520.

During the mid-1520s, a strong Muslim threat was being developed by the powerful warlord's massed forces in Harar, in eastern Ethiopia. The emperor was in no hurry to forge a military alliance with Portugal whose motives were still considered as suspicious regarding the Ark of the Covenant, but the forces of Ahmed 'Grag' (the left-handed) were soon to pose a far greater threat to the very existence of Ethiopian Christendom. In 1528, the Muslims declared a holy war and regularly entered the Christian highlands to burn churches, villages and put many thousands of people to the sword. Eventually, in 1535, the emperor sent an envoy to Portugal but, because of the Muslim's hold over the Red Sea ports and other areas, it took a while to reach its destination. The Portuguese contingent of 450 musketeers with matchlocks, hand-guns and heavy artillery eventually arrived in 1541, only to find that Axum had been attacked and the most holy church of Saint Mary of Zion raised to the ground. The Ethiopian royal chronicle of 1541, however, speaks of the Portuguese forces confidence and praises their courage and boldness in assisting to gain decisive victories against Gragn. The Portuguese commander was none other than Don Christopher da Gama, son of Vasco, the famous navigator and explorer and, despite overwhelming odds, repeatedly beat Gragn's forces before he was wounded in the knee and arm and captured. After being horribly tortured, he was brought before Gragn who drew his sword and cut off his head. Not many weeks after, Gragn was shot dead on the shores of Lake Tana and, with the Moorish army missing his presence and falling into total confusion, were pursued and slaughtered.

And so, after 15 years of destruction and violence, the Muslim attempt to subdue the Ethiopian Christian Empire ended after tens of thousands of Ethiopians and 250 Portuguese had been killed. The Ark, having been taken by priests to an island on Lake Tana before the holy church of Saint Mary of Zion was destroyed, where it remained in safekeeping for many years after Gragn's death. In the mid-1600s, the then emperor, Fasilidas, built a new cathedral of Saint Mary of Zion in Axum over the gutted ruins of the old one. With due ceremony, the sacred relic was at last returned and re-installed in all its glory.

(to be continued in May 2024's issue)

Mike Walsham

PRAYER PAGE

Almighty God,
you have entrusted your Church a share in the
ministry of your Son our great high priest:
inspire by your Holy Spirit the hearts of many to offer
themselves for the ministry of your Church,
that strengthened by his power,
they may work for the increase of your kingdom
and set forward the eternal praise of your name;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen

St George, Martyr, Patron of England, c304 23rd April

God of hosts, who so kindled the flame of love
in the heart of your servant George that he bore witness to the risen Lord
by his life and by his death:
give us the same faith and power of love
that we who rejoice in his triumphs
may come to share with him the fullness of the resurrection;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen

Almighty God,
Father of all mercies and giver of all comfort:
deal graciously, we pray thee, with those who mourn,
that casting every care on thee,
they may know the consolation of thy love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

CHURCH SERVICES – APRIL

I Sunday 7th April – Easter 2		
9am	Parish Communion	Little Gaddesden
11am	Parish Communion	Great Gaddesden
6pm	Evensong	Nettleden
II Sunday 14th April – Easter 3		
9am	Morning Prayer	Nettleden
9am	Café Church	Little Gaddesden
11am	Café Church	Great Gaddesden
III Sunday 21st April – Easter 4		
9am	Parish Communion	Little Gaddesden
11am	Parish Communion	Great Gaddesden
6pm	Evensong	Nettleden
IV Sunday 28th April – Easter 5		
9am	Morning Prayer	Nettleden
9am	Parish Communion	Little Gaddesden
11am	Parish Communion	Great Gaddesden
I Sunday 5th May – Easter 6 / Rogation Sunday		
9am	Parish Communion followed by APCM	Little Gaddesden
11am	Parish Communion	Great Gaddesden
6pm	Evensong	Nettleden
Mid-Week Services		
Tuesdays	9am Holy Communion	Great Gaddesden
Thursdays	10am Holy Communion	Little Gaddesden

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Deadline Date: Friday 19th April