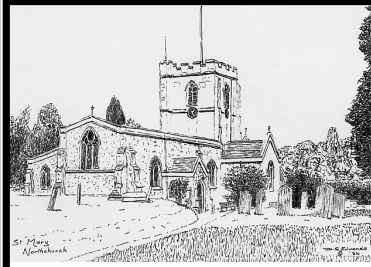


St Mary's Northchurch Newsletter



Parish Room Bookings:
Emily Millar
Mobile: 07929934367

October 2019



Church enquiries to:
Revd Jonathan Gordon
01442 871547
revjagordon@googlemail.com

Harvest Thanksgiving

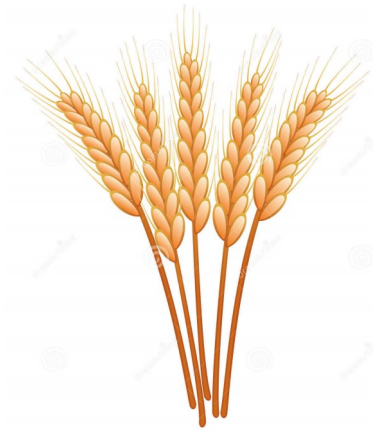
Throughout October we will be celebrating Harvest at St Mary's with the Harvest Thanksgiving service on Sunday October 6th at 10.00am and on the same day a Russian Choir will be visiting for a concert at 6.00pm.

Over the following weeks the church will be welcoming St Mary's and Westfield School and also the Lamphouse Theatre Company who will be performing "**Wild Boy: The True Story of Peter the Wild Boy,**" from October 16th to the 19th. If you would like to see the performance then the tickets are available via the following link:

www.seaty.co.uk/wildboy

Harvest is always a special time in the church's year. We are very grateful to the Flower Guild for getting the church ready for the celebrations and in an area surrounded by farms and local allotments the services in church will give thanks to God for the fruits of the earth. Yet, there other parts of the season that provide a focus. The concern over Climate Change and Global Warming is not new, but in recent times it has been given a sharper focus by the actions of Extinction Rebellion and also the protests and activism of young people. The leading figure in this has been Greta Thunberg. At present, on social media, she has 1.4 million followers on Twitter and has recently sailed to New York to raise concerns over the threat to the planet. Her message is that we need to inform ourselves about the dangers the planet is in and create a grassroots movement, that through

democratic means and action, will compel those in power to act and drastically cut the use of fossil fuels. She has become an inspirational figure for many and part of a worldwide coalition in which young people are taking the lead.



Another focus of Harvest is generosity and sharing what we have. We will in partnership with the schools and other churches be supporting the work of Decorum Emergency Nightshelter and a list of what is required is on the church website and also on the porch of St Mary's. Please do bring something along to the service on October 6th and your gifts will be presented during the service. Alternatively, the church is open during the day and please bring along any donations and they will be sent onto DENS. On the DENS website there is the story of a young person called Leo. He describes how there are three words to describe being homeless, namely, "dark, low and helpless. The days can move quickly and there's a lot to do but at night it's depressing." DENS is an organization that provides young people, such as Leo, with dignity and hope. The generosity of people in the parish always makes such a positive difference.

Rev Jonathan Gordon

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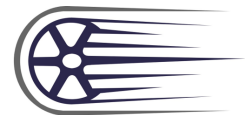
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Could you be Secretary or Treasurer at the Northchurch WI?

The Branch was started a hundred years ago in February and it would be a real tragedy if we were to close down, which is what will happen if we don't fill these posts.

If you are interested in either of these vacancies please contact Marilyn Hill, President of Northchurch WI, on 07843 125592 for more details.



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This Month in 1880 ...

The Reverend Augustus Frederick Birch was appointed Rector of St Mary's, Northchurch. Born in Suffolk in 1827, the son of clergyman, William Henry Rous Birch, Augustus went to Eton and later studied at Kings College Cambridge. After graduating in 1848, he returned to Eton to become an assistant Master. It was not long however before Augustus decided to join the clergy, and in 1852 he was ordained a deacon, becoming a priest in 1860.

Augustus's first parish was at St Mary's, Edlesborough, which dominates the landscape just below Ivinghoe Beacon. The same year he married Ann Corrance, the daughter of a Justice of the Peace and wealthy landowner from Suffolk. Augustus and Ann would go on to raise seven children, two boys and five girls. In 1863, Augustus was appointed the Rural Dean of Ivinghoe.

Augustus succeeded the late Revd. Sir John Hobart Culme Seymour as Rector of St Mary's, Northchurch in October 1880, and it was under him that work started on the remodelling of the church building (see September edition). The Birch family lived in the large Rectory adjacent to the church which had been commissioned and built for his predecessor. In 1890, he was joined at St Mary's by a recently appointed curate, Reginald Henry Pope. Looking to the future, Revd Birch decided to

commission his retirement home on land at the top of New Road, where it turns sharply left on the way to Ashridge. The new house was called "The Hollow". Sadly, in July 1898 Revd. Birch died, aged 71, before he could retire there. He was succeeded at St Mary's by his former curate, Reginald Henry Pope, who in 1900 married Alice Mary Birch, one of Augustus Birch's daughters. Revd. Augustus Birch's body now lies in the churchyard at St Mary's, Edlesborough.

Richard North



Mind your tongue!

I was in Derby recently, watching the Australian cricketers. A young man put in 22 good-looking overs of off-spin for Derbyshire, economical but without a wicket. Good experience when you are just 18. Then he took the catch that dismissed Steve Smith for 27. Smith headed for the nets. Not going to make that mistake again!

The young man was born in Afghanistan. His family came to England to escape the war.

During the tea interval, I overheard part of a conversation between two well-dressed men in blazers, ties and panama hats. They were on the nation's favourite topic – what else?

"See that Bercow?" said one. "He should be shot. In any other country, he would have been." And in case his friend entertained any doubts, he added "I mean it."

Really?

Catherine Spelman has announced that she is standing down as an MP. A determined fighter for the interests of

her constituents, from car workers to single mothers, she had taken to wearing a panic button after receiving death threats. The level of abuse faced by MPs is unprecedented, she said: "People can say things which, if they wrote it or said it to your face, are not legal."

"The tongue", says the Bible, "is a fire. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire!" And then it adds that it "is itself set on fire by hell."

Let's mind our tongues. Would we not rather live in a country that welcomes promising young cricketers who dismiss Australian stars and selects them for England Under-19, than in one that pours forth venom on people who are trying to do their job as they believe they should?

I will keep an eye on Hamidullah Qadri as his career develops. Maybe he will enable England to win the Ashes in a few years. Even if he doesn't, he can always tell his grandchildren how, still a schoolboy, he caught Steve Smith. Good luck to him!

David White

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Valerie Scores a Century!

No, I haven't taken up cricket. But at the end of August I rang my 100th quarter peal. I'm told that's not bad for someone who was already in 'mature years' before first taking hold of a bell rope.

When you learn to ring, you don't know where it will take you. Each new skill is built on the foundations of those you have already learned. Each new challenge met brings another possibility into view. What you find out very early on is that the experienced ringers around you have immeasurable patience, will give you a lot of encouragement, and want you to achieve your best.

You also experience the fun of going to different churches to ring on different bells. You learn that some of the ringers you think of as experts have rung at well over 6,000 different towers. That gave me the idea of recording the towers I rang at and, never thinking I would create much of a list, I also noted the bells I have rung, of which the oldest first sounded in the 14th century (Little Missenden) and the youngest had only been in place for a year (Isles of Scilly). It was a moment of pride when I rang the tenor at Hemel Hempstead: that was the final bell in the Western District (= local bell club) that I hadn't rung – and it was my heaviest to date.

I heard expert ringers talking about quarter peals and peals – chunks of non-stop ringing. Would I ever be able to do that? You don't know until you try. Three years after I had first pulled a bell rope, I rang my first two quarter peals on the same day! Next ambitions: to ring 10 QPs; to ring the fancy pattern on an 'inside' bell, ie the ones that make the 'tunes'; and to ring QPs on 8 bells, not just 6. By the time I'd achieved all that, I was encouraged to learn more methods (= tunes) – and so it went on. Could I ring a QP for every year of my age? Yes – actually on THE birthday!. Could I reach 100 QPs?

I can't say that ringing has taken me round the world, but I

did plan my itinerary in New Zealand so that I could attend all 8 practice nights. Visitors to Dunedin are always challenged to ring the most southerly bell in the world (their treble); and at Hamilton I rang their tenor which weighs just over a ton! Yes, a ringer can turn up at a tower anywhere and be invited to ring. What a privilege it has been for me, both in this country and abroad, to be the one who enabled local ringers to ring a method (= tune) they couldn't otherwise practise – and my repertoire is not great.

One of the rewarding things about bellringing is that you don't have to do any of this fancy stuff. If you are able to ring your bell neatly in place for Sunday services, then you are valued in your tower – and by those who listen to and love hearing the bells, even though they don't know who you are.

I still don't know where ringing will take me, but I do know I want to keep ringing for fun with the many ringing friends I have made over the years, and on Sundays to the glory of God.

Valerie Clark, Northchurch bellringer



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Sunday Services at St Mary's



6th October *Harvest Thanksgiving*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Parish Eucharist
6.00pm Russian Choir

13th October *Trinity 17*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am All-Age Worship

20th October *Trinity 18*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Parish Eucharist
6.00pm Evening Prayer

27th October *Last Sunday after Trinity*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
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Thursday 17th October 7.00pm
Friday 18th October 7.00pm
Saturday 19th October 2.00pm

Wild Boy is the incredible, true, moving story of a feral child, found in the woods of Hanover, Germany in 1726, who is buried at our very own church. Wild Boy tells Peter's story with luscious live music, movement, puppetry and magic, and questions what it means to be human. Suitable for ages 8+

Book your tickets at: www.seaty.co.uk/wildboy

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