

All Saints' Cottenham: general contacts

Priest-in-charge Revd Lynda Davies
from 17th October

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Contributions for the next magazine are welcome.
Please email if possible to
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Autumn 2017



Holiday reflections by Mick Lumsden

Having returned from a lovely holiday I promised to provide our editor with a short article. Now that I come to write the article I'm struggling to know what to say - after all I am sure we most of us enjoy holidays and look with nostalgia at our holiday snaps. So I have to ask myself whether there was anything particularly noteworthy or indeed whether there actually needs to be anything particularly extraordinary.

On reflection I believe that the ordinary things are well worth noting and celebrating. Austria is beautiful and we were able to really appreciate and enjoy the beauty and tranquillity. The woods, the trees, the mountains, the flowers and blue sky and sunshine all



left me feeling profoundly grateful for having been able to make the trip. All good things come from above.

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All Saints' Cottenham

£1.50

Holiday reflections continued from page 1

My grandchildren often ask me which my favourite mountain (in the Lake District) is. I reply that all are different and all are special (much like my grandchildren!). So I do not want to claim that our holiday or the location was any 'better' than any other.



But there is a different dimension in the Austrian Tyrol. The area is strongly Catholic. In the valleys the churches are very ornate and the graveyards are beautifully kept. When you hike into the mountains you come across numerous shrines, works of art and small wayside chapels. All of these are remarkably well done and well cared for which seems to me to emphasise a deep spirituality or at least commitment of the local population.

Some of the chapels are extremely remote – I visited one after a three hour hike which was at over 6,000 feet. Inside it was simpler than some valley chapels but there were fresh flowers and candles are provided for the use of visitors and pilgrims



The **Thursday evening Discipleship Group** meets fortnightly from 7.45 to 9.30 pm and includes a Bible study. The **Monday evening group** is currently meeting once a month for fellowship and prayer. Both groups aim to encourage and support one another and are always open to new members. If you would like to know more, please contact Mick Lumsden (251371, mick@mplumsden.plus.com) or Lynda Unwin (250435 lynda.kingsfarm@gmail.com).

The **Daytime Discipleship Group** meets on Tuesdays at 1.30 pm. Anyone who is happy to study with small children present is welcome. If you are interested in joining, please contact Kirsten Burrows (kirsten.burrows@gmail.com).

The **Prayer Circle** meets on the last Thursday of the month at 2.30 pm in members' homes. We share a time of fellowship over refreshments followed by a time of prayer together, finishing around 4 pm. Everyone is very welcome to join us (please see pewsheet for venue). If you would like to know more, please speak to Jennie Steer (202026, dandi@steer.me.uk).

The monthly **Fellowship Tea** is an opportunity for anyone to meet for prayer and a chat over afternoon tea. It takes place on the third Monday of each month in the Community room at Franklin Gardens from 2.30 to 4 pm. If you would like to know more, or if you require transport to and from the tea, please contact Sue Hooks (250560) or Maggie Appleby (200035).

All Saints' Choir usually practises in All Saints' Hall on Fridays from 7 to 8 pm, but dates and times can vary. New members are always welcome. For more information, contact Frances Horgan (franceshorgan9@hotmail.com).

All Saints' Bellringers practise in the bell tower most Wednesday evenings 7.30 to 9 pm. New members are always welcome: if you would like to chat about it, call the Tower Captain, Simon Wilson (251105).

ATTIC and **Does God Matter (DGM)** are run by Christians Together in Cottenham for 11 to 16 year olds and take place at Cottenham Baptist Church on Sunday evenings from 6.30 to 8.15 pm. **ATTIC** is a youth group aiming to provide fun activities in a relaxed, friendly environment and meets every 2 to 3 weeks. **DGM** is an opportunity for young people to meet together to chat about faith, life, 'the universe' and to share thoughts and opinions in a relaxed café style setting: this group meets 3 or 4 times each term. For dates for both groups please contact Steve Whyatt (01223 237874, stevew@genr8.org).

Regular services and groups

The 10.30 am Sunday service takes place every Sunday in church. One Sunday a month is an All-Age service, other weeks are Holy Communion. See All Saints' Diary for the schedule for each month. Services always include hymns and are followed by fellowship with refreshments in the church hall.

Sunday School, for children up to Year 2, meets in the hall during the 10.30 service (except when there is an All-Age service or a 9.30 service). There is no lower age-limit, and we have toys for tinies. Parents are welcome to accompany their children until they settle. We have stories, songs, games and craft activities, and re-join parents during Communion. For information contact: Sarah Ward (sarah@wardhome.me.uk). The **Samuel Group**, for Years 3 to 6, meets upstairs at the same time. For information contact Emma McCaughan (emma.mccaughan@pobox.com).

The 9.30 Service is designed for young families and takes place in church, usually on the last Sunday of each month. See All Saints' Diary for confirmation of the date. The service lasts about half an hour and includes songs, a story and prayers suitable for very young children, followed by refreshments.

The 8.30 am Sunday service takes place every Sunday in church. This is always Holy Communion without hymns. On alternate weeks the Book of Common Prayer is used.

Morning Prayer is held on most Thursdays at 9.15 am in church. The service lasts about half an hour.

Wednesday communion services take place at different locations in the village on a monthly pattern. Details are published in the weekly and monthly notice-sheets.

Tuesday Church is designed for families with children of primary school age, but anyone of any age is welcome. They usually meet fortnightly during term-time, with games, drinks and snacks from 3.15 pm. The service is from 4 to 5 pm and includes songs, a story, craft and prayers. For information, contact Emma McCaughan (emma.mccaughan@pobox.com).

Little Saints is a group for babies and pre-school children with their parents and carers. They meet in All Saints' hall on Thursday mornings in term-time from 10 to 11.45 am. If you would like to know more, please contact Emma McCaughan (250827, emma.mccaughan@pobox.com).

Being a Catholic country there is an emphasis on Mary – I found this helpful as it seems to me to stress the humanity of Christ and God's presence with ordinary people like us. In addition there seems to be a greater emphasis or acknowledgement of suffering. Christ is mostly shown on the cross and Mary is often depicted with the sword piercing her heart.

I always struggle with Good Friday but this paradox of being surrounded by beauty but reminded of the suffering seems to me appropriate in that in our own struggles God is with us and suffers with us, and the fact that there is suffering does not nullify the reality of the beauty; light shining in the darkness is not overcome by it. Enjoying the beauty is not escapism because God is in it as well as with us in our struggles and times of despair.



Our new Priest-in-charge

We are delighted to announce that the Reverend Lynda Davies has been appointed as Priest in Charge of All Saints', Cottenham and All Saints', Rampton. Bishop David Thomson will license Lynda to her new post on Monday 16 October in All Saints', Cottenham at 7.30 pm. We look forward to welcoming her to our community!

The following message is from Lynda and her husband, Martyn, who are pictured opposite.

We are absolutely delighted to be coming to Cottenham and Rampton in the autumn, although there seems an awful lot to do between now and then, not least moving house!

I (Lynda) was ordained in the Peterborough Diocese in June 2013 and served my curacy in the town church of St Peter's, Oundle, near Peterborough, and the two village churches of Glaphthorn and Benefield. St Peter's website still contains photos, online sermons, etc, if you want to learn more.

We then moved to Longstanton as I took up the new post of Team Vicar (Designate) in October 2016 for the villages of Longstanton, Swavesey, Over, Willingham and Lolworth. This brought us closer to our daughter Bekki and son-in-law Phil who live in Swavesey, which is even more special since grand-daughter Eden arrived in June of this year. It is lovely to be hands-on grandparents! Our son Harry remained in Oundle where he is a trainee Duty Manager at the local hotel. So, at home, it's just Martyn and I and our three cats.

We've had a very enjoyable time in Longstanton and have seen God bless Lynda's ministry in so many ways, from the explosion of families coming to Messy Church in Willingham, to children and young people co-leading the All-Age service in Longstanton. Some lovely friendships have also been made with older folk. It will be very hard to leave, but we are excited to be joining the churches in Cottenham and Rampton and discovering what God has in store for the future.

shortly and some will be ready wrapped, if you prefer.

I am very grateful for all the help given in past years and I am looking forward to another successful campaign this year. If you would like further information, I will be delighted to talk to you.

My sincere thanks for all your help and support. Sue Hooks



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Operation Christmas Child by Sue Hooks

Many of you will know that All Saints Church has supported Operation Christmas Child for a number of years. Together with help from around the village, last year we managed to send almost



six hundred gift-filled shoeboxes to needy children. This continues to be a wonderful way of demonstrating real concern for children, many of whom have never before received a gift. Filled shoeboxes are distributed to needy children in many parts of the world. Nothing is asked in return and, although the organisation is Christian, boxes are given to children of any faith or none. It is heartening to know

that a simple gift can bring so much joy into the lives of children who have not had much in the past.

If you would like to be part of this year's campaign, there are a number of ways in which you can help. You could add a few items to your regular shopping which can be used at box packing days. Lists of what to include will be in church in a few weeks time. If you knit, you might make a hat, scarf or gloves to send in a box. I have patterns and some wool, if needed. Alternatively, we are always glad of help on packing days, which are Friday 3rd November and Saturday 4th November. Or perhaps you could contribute towards the cost of sending the boxes? Sadly, this year the cost has risen, due in part to the fall in the pound but also to help train those who distribute the boxes and work with the children and their communities.

Finally, could you have go at filling your own box? It is not too difficult and is very rewarding. In fact, one family said that this is the gift they most enjoy shopping for. Shoe boxes will be available

After the licensing on Monday 16th October, we would love to welcome people to the Rectory for tea and cake on some Sunday afternoons to start to get to know everyone.

We look forward to meeting you all.

Best wishes for now

Lynda and Martyn.



From the Registers

We welcome into the family of the Church by baptism

10 September Wilfred Fox Digby Palmer

We rejoice in the marriage of

29 July Jessica Deacon and Nick Drewry

25 August Samantha Barnett and Matthew Goldsworthy

We commend into God's care those who have died

23 June James Thomas Main

31 August Cynthia Katherine Knott

13 September Elizabeth Anne O'Brien

The venomous Bead

Saint Bede of Jarrow (The Venerable Bede) has been given the job of looking after the parish of Cottenham during the interregnum. In previous magazines we read some of his correspondence with his old friend Trumwine,¹ asking for advice about his new role. This is his latest update.

My dear Trumwine,

I am writing to you as usual, but I have to tell you that there is *no news*. None whatsoever! Absolutely nothing has happened in the parish for weeks and weeks. This is because we are in the middle of *the holidays*.

I can imagine your surprise as you read this. You are no doubt picturing scenes of ecclesiastical splendour: processions of gorgeously robed clerics; polished gold and silver vessels reflecting the fiery brilliance of a hundred new white candles; heart-stirring anthems echoing around the ancient vault... and all to the glory of God.

Well you can think again, my old friend. In spite of what the word clearly implies to anyone with a particle of linguistic sense, there is nothing holy about the holidays. The clue, rather oddly, is in the article. Christmas is a holiday; Easter is a holiday, in the sense that you and I understand the word. But *the holidays* are a different thing entirely, as you will see.

In a nutshell, the term denotes a period of about six weeks in the middle of the summer when it is generally felt that no serious work needs to be done. A defining characteristic of *the holidays* is that a person should *go away*. "Why?" do I hear you ask? I have absolutely no idea, but I do have a notion of *where*.

Extremes of temperature seem to be preferred. A fortunate beneficiary of one of the mildest and most moderate climates on earth will take himself to an island where the sun burns like a fireball from morning till night and the sand is too hot for his feet. Once

¹ Trumwine was Bishop of the Picts from 681 and later a monk at Whitby.

What do we do about Death?

What do we do about death?

We don't -

The monster is hidden away.

It's not in the zoo for the public to view

The look on its face would empty the place.

We don't want to die, the people would cry

Death is the curse in the back of the hearse

We don't need to see it today.

What do we do about death?

We don't -

We shovel it under the ground

Under the sod and hope there's a God

Whose principles bend at the bitterest end

Or we burn it away, and whispering say

Death is the scream at the end of the dream

There isn't a lonelier sound.

What do we do about death?

We don't -

We don't even give it a name

He's gone before to a distant shore

She's passed away, we gloomily say,

He's fallen asleep in a terminal heap.

Death is the spear that is poisoned with fear

It pierces the heart of the game.

What do we do about death?

We don't -

But once in the angry sun

A winner was slain at the centre of pain

When a battle was fought at the final resort

But because of the cross it was fought without loss

And death is the knife that will free us for life

Because of what Jesus has done.

Poem by Adrian Plass, first published in *An Alien at St Wilfred's* 1992, reproduced here by kind permission of the author.

Diocesan training day continued from page 21

We concluded with a short liturgy with pieces directed to the theme of grief and loss. What came through powerfully was the presence of God within bereavement and grief, but also that this holy presence may not be discernible to the grieving person amidst the pain and anger which can often leave us numb. Although I am a scientist, I find poetry often expresses these things best.

Adrift a poem by Tessa Wilkinson

My anchor has lost its hold
I am adrift
My boat is going where it will
The sails are tattered and torn
The sea seems enormous and uncharted
It throws me hither and thither
Into the deepest, darkest trough of despair
Then up into the sunlight and for a while there is hope
Then back again into the darkness
Will my little craft be overwhelmed?
As the huge waves of grief engulf it, will it come up again?
And again and again?
They say 'time heals...'
Can my little boat be trimmed out with new sails?
Can it sail again into a calm harbour and put down its anchor?
Can the navigation system be mended, so I know where I am going?
In time, in time... but not yet.
This storm has to be passed through, and then a time will come to
re-enter the harbour and return to still waters.

We live in an uncertain world, indeed Benjamin Franklin is said to have remarked "nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes." But although death and dying are certain, they remain the great unknown and largely a taboo. Our Christian Faith can help manage the fear of the unknown but realistically many Christians will struggle to be as confident as St Paul when he said "to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). But perhaps a greater willingness to talk about our mortality will also help us face the future and help us to engage more compassionately with those who are bereaved.

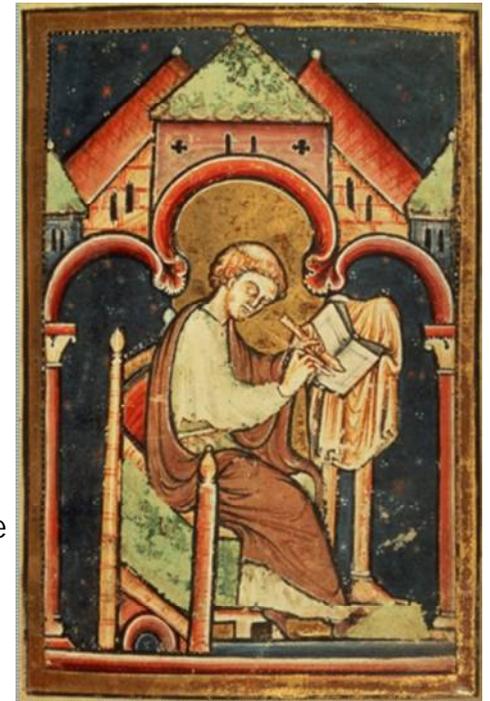
there, he will remove as much of his clothing as is consistent with basic decency, cover himself with oil and lie down on a sort of folding bed, where he will allow himself to be gently roasted throughout the day. With luck, he will remember to turn himself over at intervals in order to ensure even browning, but woe betide him if he falls asleep!

Alternatively, during *the winter holidays*, this same man will leave his comfortable fireside, where he is sheltered from such limited meteorological excesses as Britain is capable of inflicting, and travel, at vast expense, to mountainous regions buried under feet of snow, where he will spend the week sliding about on pieces of wood and, more often than not, break his leg in the process.

Do you remember, Trumwine, the terrifying picture of the Last Judgement in our church in Jarrow? Well, it seems to me that the modern Christian would take one look at the torments of the damned and immediately decide to book his holiday in Hell next year!

Dear me, in all this talk about holidays, I had almost forgotten that there is one piece of *Real News*! Cottenham is to have a new priest!! The appointment has been made and the induction will take place in October. I shall say no more for the present, but I promise you a full and complete account of the ceremony in my next letter. Until then, *cura ut valeas* as that old pagan Cicero would have said.

Ever your own, Bede



Open Garden

On a warm Sunday afternoon in July, Ken and Elizabeth Hewitt generously opened their garden to visitors in order to raise money to support Médecins sans Frontières. The following photographs were taken by Joe Webster.



friends or contacts feel embarrassed because they do not know what to say and they fear to mention the deceased because of the wish to avoid upset.

Suggestions for supporting a bereaved person also included: recognise that everyone's grief and mourning is different; the process can take a very long time – but for others the process is much shorter; be prepared to listen; do not be afraid to mention and talk about the deceased; do not be anxious about tears; often there is anger associated with grief and sometimes that anger will be directed at God – be accepting rather than judging; avoid phrases such as "I know how you feel."

There were some thoughts shared among the group which I found interesting - they made me think; I hope they have the same positive impact for you.

Firstly, clergy are receiving an increasing number of requests from bereaved people who are moving on; they are asking to dig up the ashes of their loved one to take with them. While we appreciated that having a particular sacred place to remember the dead can be important, we wondered how this bears on the idea of laying the dead to rest.

Secondly, we were encouraged to be aware of 'grief competition'. When a person dies it is usual for several or many people to be grieving. But people are different and some people show their feelings much more than others and some (particularly in a bereaved state) may not notice or appreciate that others are hurting too. The fact that someone is not weeping does not mean they are not hurting – and indeed it may be that in love they are not expressing grief because they do not want to distract from the grief of others.

Thirdly, there was discussion about how grief changes as time passes. A bereaved person explained that her expectation was that, as time went on, the grief would shrink and cease to dominate her life; the reality was that the grief did not shrink – but rather life expanded to take account of the new reality. The grief did not go, but it became a part of a new and richer life.

Continued on page 22

Diocesan training day

Mick Lumsden reports on a training day about grief and loss, which he and Pam attended in their capacity as ALMs at All Saints' Cottenham. The event was designed to help those seeking to improve their skills in supporting the bereaved.

I was attracted to the course for a number of reasons:

- I believe strongly that death and dying are fundamental parts of life but most of the time we try to pretend that we are immortal.
- I have found in my professional career that often the best work is done outside the church, and many people have their lives sorted so much better than I have; but when it comes to death they have nothing useful to say. By contrast, within the church, there can be hope and a different vision of death.
- I know a little from personal experience of the shock and trauma that bereavement brings and the value of caring individuals who will take time to listen and support; I also know how difficult it can be to know what to say and do to help.

The session started with useful definitions: 'Bereavement' is what happens to you (someone close dies); 'Grief' is what you feel – your emotions; 'Mourning' is what you do – activities to honour the deceased or to come to terms with a changed world.

Some of the guidance given might appear obvious, but often the obvious is worth repeating. Most importantly, one of the biggest problems facing the bereaved is isolation. This sometimes happens on a practical basis – when someone loses a life partner the household may suddenly drop from two people to just the one – the bereaved person is not only coping with their grief but a huge practical change.

But even if there are no appreciable practical changes, isolation can happen because the powerful emotions can create a gulf - often the community does not include or embrace the bereaved person; this can be for a number of reasons but the most common is that



Weddings and baptisms

a report by Margaret Edwards

During the Interregnum many people have stepped into various roles to help keep everything running smoothly during this period. This also includes ensuring that it is possible for those wishing to get married, or to have their child baptised, are able to do so. In fact there have been nine Weddings and six Baptisms.

During the Vacancy I have been the initial point of contact for these families and couples, inviting the wedding couple to hear their Banns being read during the morning service, helping them to familiarise themselves with our beautiful building. My role has been mainly an administrative one, collating all the relevant details and information ready to fill in the necessary Certificates and Registers, completing the quarterly marriage returns which have to be sent to the Cambridge Register Office. Attempting not to make any mistakes on these rather official documents, as well as being there on the day to help ensure everything runs smoothly. It has certainly been a very steep learning curve, and there have been a few sleepless nights. However, it has been a very great privilege to share and play a small part in these services.



The church at Yattendon, Berkshire, where Robert Bridges lived in his later years



retire, after which he devoted himself to literary research. In 1913 he was appointed Poet Laureate, a post he held until his death in 1930.

His poems reflect a deep Christian faith; he published the *Yattendon Hymnal*, which he created specifically for musical reasons, realising the important connection between words and music. This is reflected in his choice of Herbert Howells' wonderful familiar tune, *Michael* - a lasting and brave memorial to Howells' nine year old son, who contracted polio on a family holiday and died three days later.

To sum up:

There's something about a fine old hymn
That can stir the heart of a man;
That can reach the goal of his inmost soul
Such as no mere preaching can.
It's more than the tune of the song he sings
And it's more than the poet's rhyme –
It's the Spirit of God working through these things
That gives them their power sublime!

Author unknown

Hymns by poets continued from page 17

A real favourite of so many people, is the wonderful *Dear Lord and Father of mankind*. These are the words of the American poet, **John Greenleaf Whittier** (1807-1892). Although not in our hymn book, you may also know *O brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother, Where pity dwells, the love of God is there*, a moving hymn inspired by Whittier's compassion and opposition to slavery in America.

Whittier grew up on a small family farm in Massachusetts. It was not very profitable and had to support a number of relatives. John was frail and not cut out to be a labourer – also found to be colour blind when he could not select ripe strawberries from unripe ones! His education was basic, but he was an avid reader of his father's six books on Quakerism. To pay for his education he worked as a shoemaker, and also paid part from any spare produce from the farm. Becoming interested in politics, he became a founder member

of the America Anti-Slavery Society and thus lived through and experienced first-hand the effects of this very difficult time in America's history. The words of *Dear Lord and Father* echo the values of Whittier's Quakerism; the wonderful tune *Repton* is adapted from the contralto aria *Long since in Egypt's plenteous land* from Charles Hubert Parry's oratorio *Judith*.



Now let's finish with a really rousing and uplifting hymn – *All my hope on God is founded*. These are the wonderful words of the poet **Robert Bridges** (1844-1930). A doctor by training, following education at Eton College and Corpus Christi, Oxford, he went on to study at St Barts, became a casualty physician, and later at the London Hospital for Sick Children. Lung disease forced him to

As I have liaised with clergy, choir, organist and bell ringers, endeavouring to make sure that all is perfect for the 'Big Day', it has become very clear to me that these occasions are very much a collaborative affair.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved; especially our churchwardens, choir, organists and bell ringers for their support and understanding. IT IS TRULY APPRECIATED! I am sure Lynda will relish working with such a generous group of individuals.

During this period I have been made aware of the great warmth and affection these individuals, and their families, feel towards All Saints' Church.

I only pray that in return they have experienced something of God's love as they celebrate these important life events with us.



Jesus Christ, Son of God,
make yourself known through us.
Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
speak through us to others.

News from Alison Wedgbury

Alongsider, 2016-2017, at the Society of Mary and Martha, Sheldon, Devon www.sheldon.uk.com

Recently I was asked by a Sheldon volunteer “*What’s it like, living at Sheldon as an outsider . . . or do I mean an insider . . . no, what’s the right word, ‘alongsider’?*”

My gap year aged 65 to 66 has been truly amazing. I’ve had the chance to help build, moderate and promote the new Sheldon Hub which supports clergy www.sheldonthub.org as well as being a receptionist, kitchen / garden helper, barmaid, babysitter, theatre steward, burger bar server and leading prayers in chapel – some of those are new skills for me! Through the first stage of the Enneagram process I’ve learned that I’m mainly a Five, an ‘Observer’ according to www.theenneagram.co.uk

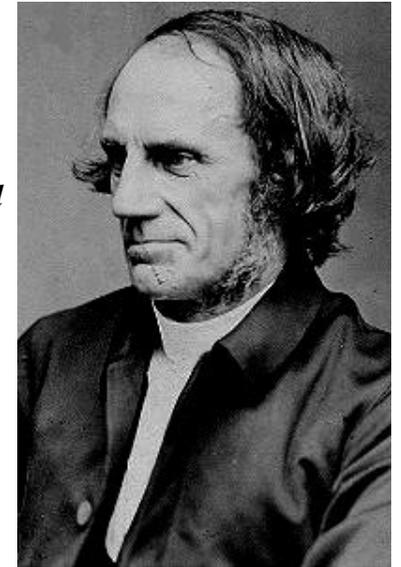
So firstly, the ‘**outsider**’ perspective. I first came to Sheldon as a guest in 2011, then as a volunteer in other years. I love:



- the beauty of the landscape: Sheldon site, Teign Valley, Dartmoor, South Devon coastline.
- the changing seasons: glorious autumn colours when I arrived in 2016; atmospheric mists and frosts in winter; sun, warm rain and wonderful greenery with wild flowers in spring, and quantities of vegetables and fruit in summer.
- the walking: hills, tracks and quiet roads everywhere, practice for my fourth Sheldon Camino (May 2017, the Portuguese Coastal route – great wine and food too!).
- the very friendly locals: people, sheep and lambs, the Sheldon cat

the Glastonbury Thorn flowers each year to confirm this lovely story. Blake was conscious of the conditions of the Industrial Revolution – hence the reference to the ‘dark satanic mills’. The poem was originally part of the preface to Blake’s epic poem on John Milton, but was taken up by the suffragette movement in 1917. Sir Charles Hubert Parry was somewhat reluctantly persuaded to compose a tune, which he handed over to Sir Walford Davies saying – “Here’s a tune, old boy, do what you like with it!” The rest is history!

Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885) was the nephew of the famous Lake Poet, William Wordsworth. He wrote the lovely Pentecost hymn *Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost*, and *Alleluia, alleluia, hearts to heaven and voices raise*. Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, he was a distinguished athlete, won the Chancellor’s Gold Medal for Poetry twice (which maybe explains his great gift for writing words for hymns – of which he wrote many which are not included in our own hymnal). After taking Holy Orders he became headmaster of Harrow, until in 1844



Sir Robert Peel appointed him a Canon of Westminster. This was followed by Benjamin Disraeli making him Bishop of Lincoln, a post he retained until his death. Of his seven children, several had distinguished careers in the Church and education – the eldest son Bishop of Salisbury, the eldest daughter the first principal of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford and founder of St Hugh’s. He spent many years writing a *Commentary of the whole Bible*, which is still available today, and *Memoirs* of his uncle William Wordsworth. Of his hymn writing he said “It is the first duty of a hymn to teach sound doctrine and thence to save souls.”

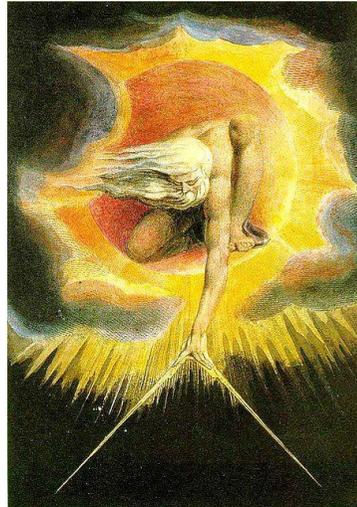
Continued on page 18

Hymns by poets continued from page 15

Probably the most famous of all in the collection this time (thanks to the Women's Institute!) is **William Blake's Jerusalem**. Blake (1757-1827) was a real 'multi-tasker' – poet, artist, engraver and printmaker. Largely unrecognised during his lifetime, he was rated thirty-eight in the poll for the one hundred Greatest Britons, and, an art critic claimed, "the greatest artist Britain has ever produced." Attending school only until he could read and write, Blake left at age ten to work on producing engravings of famous paintings for his father's print works. This produced a good income, enough to send William to study at the Royal Academy.

He had a strong religious conviction and a tendency to experience strange visions, which influenced his own art work. Many of these, such as his illustrations to *The Book of Job* - from which the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams created his ballet *Job, a Masque for Dancing* - are really scary!

Blake also wrote a huge amount of poetry – you'll be familiar with his *Age of Innocence*, *The Tyger*, and *The Lamb*, but most of all with *Jerusalem*. This was inspired by the legend that the young Jesus accompanied Joseph of Arimathea (who was a tin merchant) on a trip to England, where, on the way to the Cornish tin mines, they visited Glastonbury. Joseph reputedly planted his staff in the ground, and to this day,



Blake's engravings: above, God the Architect; below, Adam naming the animals



and dog, cows, deer, birds, alpacas: however, badgers, rabbits and squirrels are *persona non grata*.

What about the 'insider' question? I've heard the stories, seen the photos, read the book and seen the most recent buildings being completed. But it's the core Community, long-standing staff, volunteers and trustees who know Sheldon in depth and are creators of all that has happened here over nearly forty years. As I'm here for a fixed time (a year) I get a snapshot of the 'insider' experience, working behind the scenes, gradually remembering where everything is on site and how to do things the Sheldon way.



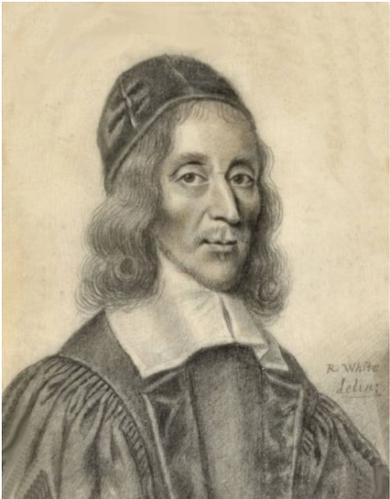
What I can say is that being a short-medium term 'alongsider' at Sheldon is a unique privilege. It's a full-time commitment, a challenging six day week. There's no blueprint – it's been different for every person in that role. I've worked mainly on the Sheldon Hub using existing IT skills and adding many more, especially in social media. I've learned an enormous amount from everything: living in community, the rhythm of prayer and special liturgy, gaining a spiritual director, sharing in the in-house retreat, reading widely and deeply and seeing life in a rural economy that's very different from the Fen Edge.

Thank you to all at All Saints' Cottenham and Rampton for your prayers and for all the books and maps I bought with your gift in 2016! I look forward to returning east at the end of 2017 as a lifelong East Anglian at heart, with family and friends mainly on that side of the country. I'm slowly discerning what to do next, where and how – watch this space.

Hymns written by poets

Continuing the series by Pat Labistour on our favourite hymn writers

It seems logical to expect that some well-known poets have also written words for hymns. I was quite surprised to discover that some of those we love to sing today stretch back over several centuries. Some names you will know, others might not be quite so familiar unless you are 'into' poetry – but all are great. I've chosen a selection of those which may be the most familiar and best-loved.



Taking them chronologically, let's start with the wonderful Elizabethan poet, **George Herbert** (1593-1633), who wrote

***The God of love my shepherd is;
Teach me my God and King;
King of glory, King of peace, I will
love thee; and Let all the world in
every corner sing.*** This last was

surprisingly prophetic, as it was translated into many languages and published in no less than one hundred and three different hymnals! Amazing to realise that we have

been singing his words for over four hundred years!

One of the so-called 'metaphysical' poets, and regarded as "one of the foremost devotional lyricists," he was born into a wealthy aristocratic family; well-educated, he entered Trinity College, Cambridge with the intention of becoming a priest. His great gift of oratory attracted the attention of James 1, who persuaded him to enter Parliament. After a short spell in politics, he became Rector of a parish in the Salisbury diocese and was much loved by his parishioners for his unflinching care, bringing the sacraments to the sick and providing food and clothing for the needy. Never healthy, he died of consumption at the age of thirty-nine.

William Cowper (1731-1800) was one of the most popular poets of his day, probably because he wrote about rural life and English country scenes which ordinary folk could relate to. You'll probably remember his hilariously funny poem about the crazy ride of John Gilpin? A frail and emotionally sensitive child, he never recovered from the death of his mother when he was only six years old. His father directed his education into studying law, but the pressure was so great that he had a mental breakdown and attempted suicide on three occasions. During spells in mental institutions, he read the Bible and realised he had a personal relationship with Christ.



Gilpin's Ride, an illustration by Randolph Caldecott

He became close friends with John Newton, the converted captain of a slave ship (of whom more in a later article). Together they wrote many hymns, producing the Olney Hymnal, and Cowper continued with his poetry – and his anti-slavery campaigning – his poem *A Negro's Complaint* became particularly well-known and stood the test of time, as it was frequently quoted in the twentieth century by Martin Luther King. Cowper's love of the Bible convinced him that he was not destined for a future in Hell, as he once firmly believed. One of his most popular hymns, ***God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform*** certainly bears this out!

