

St John's Church

serving Stanborough, Lemsford, Cromer Hyde



February / March 2023

£1



Front cover: Detail from window in St Mary's Church, Selborne: St Francis and the birds, Memorial to the 18thC naturalist Gilbert White. See Page 21

Above: Photos from St John's Crib Service

Below: Photos from St John's Christingle service including our 'Human' Christingle



Time for a tidy up!

Recently, I succumbed to the dreaded winter lurgey. Whilst recovering in bed, all I could manage to do some days was watch Netflix. In the midst of this binge-watching extravaganza, I somehow stumbled across a series by the wonderful Marie Kondo. For those of you who have yet to be indoctrinated, Marie is a Japanese tidying and decluttering expert who has made millions encouraging us to find joy and peace in cleaning and organising our homes. I love a tidy and clean home; it just makes me feel calmer and more in control. I'm less fond of the work it takes to create such a house, but nevertheless I was instantly hooked by Marie's tips.

Amongst much else, Marie is famous for her advice on storing clothes upright (truly life changing) and instructing her followers to take all items of one category and pile them in a heap, before holding each and determining whether it sparks joy. Much to my family's disappointment, it turns out all my books spark a *lot* of joy....

It was Marie's advice to thank each piece you choose not to keep that really got me thinking. If you're the sort of person who finds it hard to let things go, it really does make you feel better to thank an outgrown jumper for what it's given you before folding it carefully into the

charity bag.

Lately, I've found myself applying this logic to things in my life beyond possessions. When I see myself as 'good' at one thing and 'bad' at another, I ask myself whether I'm hanging onto a version of myself that has served its time and now needs to be laid gently aside with thanks for all it has achieved. When I hold on tight to particular methods, routines or tasks, I ask myself whether I'm doing so because they are life giving and necessary, or because they're simply what I have always done. In other words, I've been thinking about what might emerge if I let myself say goodbye to some things and create space and time for something new.

This is all very seasonal. Every year, many Christians embark on an annual internal spring clean during Lent. At its best, this is a chance to simplify life for a time and remove the distractions that stop us seeing what really matters, be that rich foods, alcohol, smart phones or indeed Netflix! The aim is not just self-restraint for its own sake, but more to help us see what we usually miss, and give us the time and space to draw closer to God. To create the



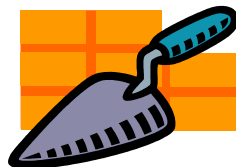
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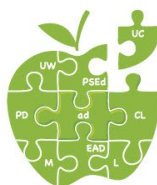
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quiet places where we can hear what it is He saying to us.

As I write this article it's still January, so I'm not sure exactly what I'll be giving up or taking on this Lent. However, I do know that it will involve a bit of internal Marie Kondo-ing. I'm going to spend time thinking about what is joy giving and make sure that isn't squeezed out, and I'm going to decide what is distracting clutter that I need to say thank you and

farewell to, so I can focus on what matters. Even if a tidy house is still a work in progress, I'll hopefully then be more ready to celebrate the new life of Easter when it comes.

With love - **Kathryn**

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For a taster, take a look at the trailer at www.24-7prayer.com/lectio-course

Services

February 2023

5th 3rd BEFORE LENT

8 am HC BCP 11 am All Age Worship & Baptism

12th 2nd BEFORE LENT

8 am HC BCP 11 am HC

19th 1st BEFORE LENT

8 am HC BCP 11 am MP

22nd ASH WEDNESDAY JOINT SERVICE

Time tbc

26th LENT

8 am MP BCP 11 am HC

March 2023

5th LENT 2

8 am HC BCP 11 am All Age Worship

12th LENT 3

8 am HC BCP 11 am HC

19th LENT 4 - MOTHERING SUNDAY

8 am MP BCP 11 am All Age Worship or MP

26nd LENT 5

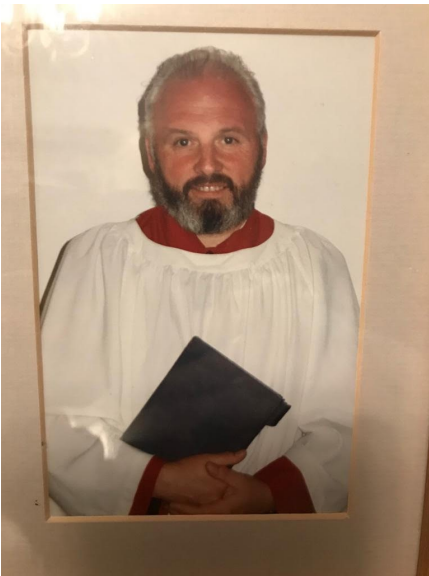
8 am HC BCP 11 am HC

HC Holy Communion; MP Morning Prayer; BCP Book of Common Prayer; NB Kathryn's day off is Friday each week

Carole Payne writes

In recent years, I have occasionally attended Easter services at St Michael's, and certainly since we had a connection through a shared vicar. I have always felt very welcome and to be a valued part of their congregation. But that is not my only connection.

For those of you who know me well, this will not be new to you ! Terry, my late husband, who passed away in 2013, was born in Birchwood Avenue, Hatfield, 100 yards away




from me, and two months before me. His roots were from the Tottenham area of London and mine were from the NE of England, Sunderland/ Hartlepool area. We were in the same class at Green

Lanes school for the first three years of our education. This was a surprise to both of us as we neither remembered each other from that time, it was evident from the old school registers, and discovered on a school reunion in much later life.

So where does this lead us to? Terry joined St Michael's choir as a young



boy, and I was christened at Birchwood Methodist church at the other end of Birchwood Avenue. My family, and especially my mother had a very strong Methodist background. She was even a Rechabite, but that's another story!

Sadly, at some point, Terry was asked to leave the choir after he ate peanuts during a service, or 

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maybe a choir practice? and left the husks on the floor in the choir pews!

We next met up when, along with a group of friends, he came along to the Methodist Church to see what was going on in a youth club that had just been started. Regaled in Teddy Boy outfits and smart hairdos, they appeared at the door, where I gave

services but time and circumstances meant we were too late to organise this. However, some of St Michael's choir joined us for our Candlelight Service, and eight of us were able to join them for their Nine Lessons, on the evening of our Nine Lessons Service. Not only were they very enjoyable events, illness struck both



them membership forms to fill in and took their subscriptions. And the rest, they say, is history.

Hence I have a fondness for St Michael's that goes way back. And now, I am happy to say this link can be reformed again. Though our two choirs have had a good relationship informally in the past, we now have a chance and a willingness to find ways to work together more closely. In the lead up to Christmas, there was talk of joining together for our Nine Lessons

choirs and the support was much needed and appreciated! We're now looking forward to greater things, singing together at weddings maybe, and other occasions as they arise.

Singing, and music in general, has been a very important part of my life, and the benefits both physical and social, and to our wellbeing in general have never been more evident than they are now. If you have ever thought you'd like to have a go at singing, any age or ability, do come and have a chat



to our musical director Tim, or any member of the choir, you will be most welcome.

John Martindale

John sadly died at the end of December. Many of us will fondly remember John, who, with his wife Eileen, was a regular member of St John's congregation. His funeral will take place at 2pm, 31st January at St John's Church. All are welcome.

The Editor writes

We offer a huge thank you to **Geoffrey Hollis** the outgoing editor, for many years, of this Magazine. I trust I can live up to his standards.

Parish Magazine copy date for the next issue: **26th March**

Christmas Charities

Herts Young Homeless

(www.hyh.org.uk) is an independent charity that has been supporting vulnerable people in Hertfordshire since 1998. It offers free services for young people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and has developed and provides mediation, education and other services to avoid family relationship breakdown.

The Children's Society

(www.childrenssociety.org.uk) believes that every person deserves a good childhood and fights for the hope and happiness of young people where it is threatened by neglect, exploitation or abuse.

Young Life International (<https://welwynhatfield.ylinternational.org/events/>) partners with local churches and other ministries to take the good news of Jesus to young people, enabling them to live life to the full. Young Life are active in Welwyn Hatfield running clubs for young people and volunteering in our local schools.

Save the Children

(www.savethechildren.org) is a UK and international charity that helps children live the life they deserve. They work around the world, including in the UK, to make sure that children everywhere receive the food, education and medical care they need.

We enjoyed some wonderful services and get-togethers over Christmas and New Year. Not least our annual Christingle celebration in January, complete with human oranges (yes really) and pizza.

You will be pleased to hear that thanks to generous donations from so many people over Christmas, church is giving away £800 to four local and national charities (listed opposite). We wanted our giving to bring light and hope for children in most need and we chose four charities who are doing just that. Thank you for giving this Christmas, and please remember these wonderful organisations, fighting for some of the most vulnerable children in our society and sharing the good news of God's kingdom here on earth.

In other news, our all-together worship continues every **first** Sunday of the month, the next being **Sunday 5th February**, led by Kathryn.

And finally, after a long break plans are underway to bring **Sunday Club** back! We have not met for a long time and it will be new for many of you, but we look forward to welcoming you. We will be meeting on the **second Sunday** of



the month only to start with, during the 11am worship. There will be time and space to play, talk, pray, make, sing, and hear a Bible story together. Children from babies to year 6 and beyond are invited to join us in the annexe. Please look out for more information on a start date on Facebook, our website and on our regular email newsletter.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back very soon!

Contact: joholifield@gmail.com or revkathrynalford@gmail.com

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Church Finance Update

Without wishing to sound rather like a record that is stuck last year turned out to be another very difficult year for the church finances. As has been the trend of recent years we suffered from diminishing income and rising costs which served to ensure that we would finish the year with a substantial deficit.

We began 2022 expecting that we would have a loss of approximately £13,500 for the year. In fact we ended the year with a loss of £9500. That sounds positive under the circumstances but unfortunately this better than forecast result reflects the fact that we were not able to complete some costly electrical work around the church, particularly in the church tower. The budget for that work was therefore not needed in 2022, sparing us of a deficit which would have been £5000 higher. The flip side of that news is that the work has fallen into the 2023 budget, so a further difficult year is to be expected in 2023.

There are positives to report though! We had a fantastic fete in May 2022, after the two Covid year cancellations. A record amount was raised for our finances, which was a huge help. We also appealed to the Diocese for support with our largest annual bill, our Parish Share payment. After presenting our case we were delighted to hear that we



will receive a reduction of £10,000 annually in our Parish Share bill, for at least the next three years. This will provide a huge help with our drive to eliminate our annual deficits. Of course, we also started 2022 without a vicar in post and now have Kathryn Alford, so we all feel energised and optimistic to push on with growing and developing the church in the years ahead.

I would like to finish by saying a very sincere thank you to all those who gave money to support the church in 2022. It is these regular weekly and monthly gifts that allow us to survive, and we are most grateful for this ongoing support which totalled some £34,000 in 2022.

Kevin Earl, Chair of St John's Church Finance Committee, 16/1/23



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Happy New Year!

I hope it is not too late to wish you all a very Happy New Year! Our spring term (in name only – it is still so cold) is now in full swing. The staff and children have been quickly returning to all the routines of life in school. Collective worship, clubs and so much more are underway once again. This term Rock Steady has begun. The children have enjoyed forming rock bands with their new tutor, Olivia, on Thursday mornings; young rock stars in the making!

Every month we focus on a different value and for January our value has been Responsibility. One of the worship groups (children from year 6) and I planned the collective workshops assemblies based on this value. In one assembly we thought about our responsibility to the environment, this was led by our school eco-council. The children focussed, in particular, on the shocking amount of rubbish that finds its way to the sea where it then disrupts sea life and on the things we can do limit this. Other collective worship assemblies have focussed on our responsibility for

our actions and our responsibility for others. At school our children in reception are paired up with a buddy from year 6. The relationships between our youngest and oldest children exemplifies responsibility as well as so many other values such as kindness and love. The older children show such responsibility for their younger friends at playtime and lunchtimes – it is lovely to see.



Looking ahead we have some lovely times planned. The week beginning Monday 6th February is our Feeling Good Week. We are planning a range of activities which relate to the 5 Ways to Wellbeing linked to the mental health charity MIND. These activities will include learning new skills, taking part in activities such as scavenger hunts and lots of creative activities like making something to give to someone at school. We will also focus on internet safety – so important for your children.

5 Ways to Well-Being



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FEEL CONNECTED



DO WHAT YOU CAN,
ENJOY WHAT YOU DO,
MOVE YOUR MOOD



REMEMBER
THE SIMPLE
THINGS THAT
GIVE YOU JOY



EMBRACE NEW
EXPERIENCES,
SEE OPPORTUNITIES,
SURPRISE YOURSELF



Your time,
your words,
your presence



News from St John's School - Concluded

I will let you know how it all goes in my next contribution to the Parish Magazine.

Best wishes,

Michelle Boylan - Head teacher



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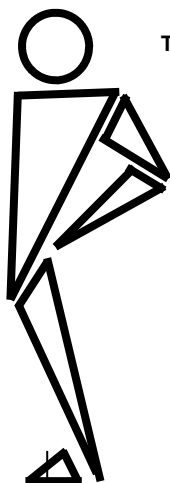
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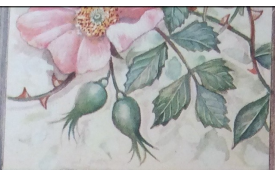
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From the Nature Diary of Hazel Macarthur '95



(1564-1616)

All my life through, the
new sights of Nature made
me rejoice like a child.

Marie Curie (1867-1934)

We have had the hottest summer for many years
and everything looked dry and arid for weeks.
Just before the weather cooled we were walking
across the horses field in the village when Bob
spotted a male. I couldn't believe it he was
scurrying to and fro between the small clumps of
dried grass, his great big front ^{paw} paws like paws
level with his head. We stood still and watched
for about a quarter of an hour. At one point

he ran over my feet but kept within a 6ft radius.
we only walked on when one of the horses started to gallop
up to us. I didn't think they surfaced in daylight hours.
It was still quite light 7pm on a summers evening.
I have heard, that after a while the young are rejected
by the parent. so maybe this was a juvenile finding
his feet as it were.

I would put the male sighting on a par with
coming face to face with a fox early one morning many
years ago and seeing a wale surface in the Minch.

Thrilled, and, it's hard to describe, sort of honoured.
13th. Oct 95

In early January, the group had a lunchtime meeting and enjoyed a positive and friendly get together. The meeting was more about catching up with old friends than



Lemsford Then

a business meeting. As we enter 2023, it was good to discuss the future of the group and our limited discussion suggested everyone is happy to carry on as we are with our meetings being mainly days out for lunch, exploring

the area and combining this with days out. It was agreed we should support the Lemsford Fete with a display and invest in a couple of mobile displays that graphically show the local area – Lemsford Village,



Lemsford Now

Stanborough, Cromer Hyde and Brocket Hall.

The display will also include a Power Point slide show of local history on our projector.

It was great to see friends of the group, Kate and Alan, who are an example of the power and reach of our websites. We have four websites including a hub site, www.lemsfordvillage.co.uk, which has links to our main site with over 500 images. Our WW1 site, built to remind us of the sacrifice of the Parish in 1914-1918 war, and a news site to keep you updated with events in 2023. Kate, who lives in France, searched on the internet for information about her Mum (a Flitney) and found our main site, contacted us and we found her mother's grave in Fleetville cemetery. The full story can be found if you go on www.lemsfordvillage.co.uk, click on OUR CHURCH then PARISH MAGAZINE and find the Parish Magazine dated April/May 2021.

We reflected on 2022 as we entered the New Year and were pleased we marked the 150th anniversary of St John's School, Lemsford with the highlight being the assembly in March where we reenacted the school assembly held in 1872. The vicar in 1872 was acted by the Reverend Edward and head teacher Mandy Evans played the part of the first head mistress Mary Seamen. Both dressed up in authentic 1872 attire. Mandy also supported the group at the 2022 Lemsford Fete

by allowing the children to set up our display. In November we rounded the year off with the help of the new head teacher, Michelle Boylan. She arranged for the group to talk on 11/11/2022 (Remembrance Day) about the sacrifice made in the Parish of Lemsford. At 11am she assembled the whole school outside around the war memorial for a minute's silence. Class 4 read poems and prayers and a young lady played a perfect last post on the trumpet. New vicar, Kathryn Alford, who I also had the pleasure to meet for the first time, ended the service with a prayer.

We have been asked to conduct a tour of the church at the end of January by Nigel (churchwarden) for a U3A group from Ware. All donations will be given to the church funds, something I would like to develop this year. Part of the future of the group is to use our resources, collected over twenty two years, to support the school and church. I also think tours of the village for outside organisations is another good use of our resources. We end these in one of our two pubs for lunch. The Sun and the Long Arm & Short Arm are part of our history and, in these hard times for the hospitality industry, they need our support. I speak from experience as my old local The Bull (East) is now a housing development.



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In 2022 Bill Dance donated his late wife's extensive collection of memories, images and memorabilia. She was a valued member of the group and is much missed. Her collection is a great addition to our extensive archive. It contains every agenda for the group's meetings from 2001 to 2013 which make fascinating reading. The earliest one recorded was on 6th November 2001 in St John's School, Class 4.

Attendees were: Jack Beswarick, Alan Bone, Ann Coe, Jean Dance, Mary de Soyres, Sue Gould, Ron Ingamells, Janet Lewis, Liz Potter, Liz Sherriff, Jean Tait, Rex Tait, Barbara Taylor and Barry Trevis.

Many readers will have fond memories of those founding members who are no longer with us. The aim of the group was to research the village, initially to mount a display at the 2002 Fete. From this developed an enthusiastic local history group with a comprehensive database covering all aspects of Lemsford parish. It has brought together like-minded people who want to understand the past.

The future is becoming clearer for the group. Like many groups pre-Covid we were struggling to get members and numbers were falling. Our monthly meeting with a speaker was reduced to every two months. This became a combination of talks open to the public in the annex with a lunchtime meeting in a local pub with guests from other history groups. Covid decimated the group,

like many others, and as we come out of a lockdown mentality we have to move with the times.

I propose a monthly get-together on the second Thursday of every month. My idea is to contact various history groups in the area with whom we are friendly - Welwyn Village, Hatfield, Wheathampstead, Codicote, St Albans, Harpenden and Ayot Green. A tour of these villages and towns will be part of the day out ending with a lunch in a local pub. Details www.lemsfordvillage.co.uk. If you are interested in joining us, contact info@lemsfordhistory.co.uk to be added to our email distribution list. If you wish to be part of the group and share our interest that is fine, but if you want to just enjoy a lunch and ask questions about the area or provide information you want to pass on (your memories of Lemsford Parish are important to the group) you will be made very welcome by the members of Lemsford Local History Group.



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How do you display your Christmas cards? For some years I have taken to sorting them into groups. About half of the ones we get have a reference to the Nativity. These are set out on a long shelf, in order, starting at the Annunciation, when the Angel Gabriel told Mary that she was going to bear Jesus, then running through the scenes in Bethlehem, and concluding with the flight into Egypt. (My children laugh at this—I can't think why). The remainder get split into themes such as Winter Scenes, Choristers, and so on. A popular group features Robins.



Although Christmas cards have been used since the 17th century it wasn't until Queen Victoria started sending 'official' Christmas cards in the 1840s that their popularity took off. At that time Royal Mail postmen wore bright red coats, and were nicknamed 'robins' or 'redbreasts'. Christmas cards were often illustrated with a 'robin' delivering cards or letters. Artists began to draw robins instead of postmen delivering the cards. Snow scenes were also popular as a reminder of the very hard winter of 1836-37.

Adult robins, both male and female, sport red breasts; why this should be so is explained by varying myths linked to Christ. One is that the robin got burned on a fire he/she fanned to keep the baby Jesus warm. Another says that when Jesus was on the road to Calvary a robin plucked a thorn from Christ's temple and a drop of blood fell on the robin's chest, turning it red.

A few years ago the robin won a BBC Springwatch poll to choose the UK's national bird. Perhaps this is because in many ways they display the foibles of humans. On the one hand they are friendly, bright, and cheerful. However they are fiercely protective of their territories and can be violent in seeing off invaders.

The front cover shows a detail of a stained glass window in Selborne, of St Francis surrounded by birds. The most prominent is perching on one of his fingers; it is of course a robin.

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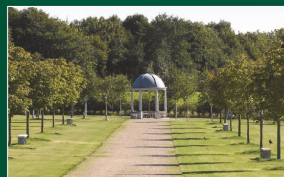
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“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (John 14:27).

And finally

All about Robin

Batman and Robin are camping in the desert. They set up their tent and fall asleep. Some hours later, Batman wakes his faithful friend. "Robin, look up at the sky and tell me what you see."

Robin replies, "I see millions of stars."

"What does that tell you?" asks Batman. Robin ponders for a minute.

"Astronomically speaking, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, it tells me that Saturn is in Leo. Chronologically, it appears to be approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, it's evident the Lord is all-powerful and we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it seems we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you, Batman?"

Batman pauses, then speaks: "Robin, someone has stolen our tent."

What happened to Batman and Robin when a herd of elephants trampled over them? *They became Flatman and Ribbon...*

B: Where does Swiss cheese come from, Robin?

R :Holey cows, Batman!

And another Robin entirely ...

Robin Hood went to see a doctor..

He was diagnosed with Menintightis.





Above: More photos from St John's Crib Service
Below: More photos from St John's Christingle service including our 'Human' Christingle





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