

# St John's Church

*serving Stanborough, Lemsford, Cromer Hyde*

See  
page 15



**Parish Magazine**

*August/September 2018*      **£1**

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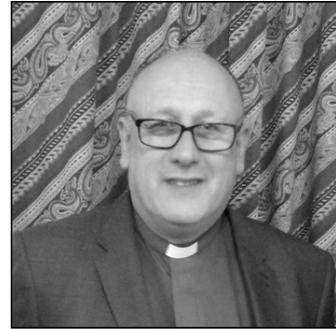


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Dear Friends

The summer thus far has been long, enjoyable and above all hot. Schools are breaking up and many of us are planning holidays which makes me wonder when did holy-days become holidays and what is the difference?



We can all think of holidays as a time to recharge our batteries or to de-stress and I suspect in many cases both. Can we do this consciously or does it just happen like magic when we leave our front doors and start our long awaited break? My family have always told me that I take four days to wind down, I relax for two or three days and then I'm mentally getting ready to come back to the parish. So is there a way of shortcutting this? Well maybe!

One practice which lends itself well to helping us relax is that of **contemplative prayer**. There are various ideas on what precisely contemplative prayer is but it could be described as a prayer of silence, and meditative unity. Its purpose is to develop our union with God. It most certainly does not mean being so holy that we are no earthly use, rather for it to work we must remain grounded.

There are three things that I personally find that are helpful. These are posture, the use of a prayer word, and the breath. All are directed at quelling the deafening reality around us.

Posture: it is easier if the body is still and in a stable position, then it is easier to keep thoughts still and stable.

The use of a prayer word, or phrase, such as the Jesus Prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, be merciful to me, a sinner"). These are not words to be used as prayers exactly but, like posture, as a means to calm thoughts.



**B**reath is the third but possibly most important element. There is a theological significance to breathing, which will be considered below, but it is also another aid to concentration. The use of the prayer word, or phrase, is combined with breathing so that the word and the inhalation and/ or exhalation of breath become one. The concentration is focussed on the word and the breaths so that we can fix our attention on God.

What is the purpose of this intense concentration? It is to bring the mind into a state where it has no thoughts beyond the contemplation of God. This does take practise and at first is beset by difficulties like hearing every noise or falling asleep.

Where does this practice come from? Well right at the start God breathes into us and in the practise of deliberate breathing we see ourselves as breathing in the peace of God. The scripture for this is God breathed life into Adam (Gen 2:7) and Jesus breathed on his apostles in order to bestow the Holy Spirit upon them (John 20:22). The practice of breathing helps us to focus on God alone.

**T**he gospels record that Jesus withdrew and went up the mountain, to be alone and to pray (Mark 6:45-46). As Christians we are clear in our understanding that the life of Jesus is an example for us to follow.

Retreating from life to be alone and to pray sounds as much like a holy-day as you can get, we leave the everyday behind and when we have been close to God return to everyday life. How long does this take? Well that's up to us.

But it seems to me a holiday helps us relax with others recharging our batteries and restoring our relationships, but a Holy-day helps us do the same but with God.

**I** wish you all a great summer of holy-days and holidays  
God bless **Paul**

**Sunday 5th**                      **Trinity 10**  
8am BCP Holy Communion led by Paul Seymour  
11am Family Service led by Jo Brooks

**Sunday 12th**                      **Trinity 11**  
8am BCP Holy Communion led by Amanda Duncan  
11 am Holy Communion led by Sue Stilwell

**Tuesday 14th 2.30 pm**      **Friendship Tea**

**Sunday 19th**                      **Trinity 12**  
8am BCP Holy Communion led by Paul Seymour  
11am Morning Prayer led by Ian Douglas

**Sunday 26th**                      **Trinity 13**  
8am BCP Holy Communion led by Amanda Duncan  
11 am Holy Communion led by **The Archdeacon of Hertford**

*\*\*\* Morning Prayer 10 am every Wednesday, except first of month when shortened Communion Service \*\*\*\*\**

**Readings**      (preacher reads the gospel at Parish Communion)

**5th**      **Ephesians 4: 1-16**      **John 6: 24-35**  
**12th**      **Ephesians 4: 25 - 5.2**      **John 6: 35,41-51**  
**19th**      **Ephesians 5: 15-20**      **John 6: 51-58**      **Psalm 111**  
**26th**      **Ephesians 6: 10-20**      **John 6: 56-69**

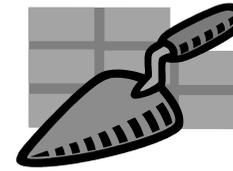
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**Sunday 2nd            Trinity 14**

8am    BCP Holy Communion led by Paul Seymour

11am   Family Service, led by Jo Brooks

**Sunday 9th            Trinity 15**

8am    BCP Holy Communion led by Paul Seymour

11am   Holy Communion led by Paul Seymour

**Tuesday 11th 2.30 pm   Friendship Tea****Sunday 16th            Trinity 16**

8am    BCP Holy Communion led by Paul Seymour

11am   Morning Prayer led by Paul Seymour

**Saturday 22nd   Church Working Party   *see page 14*****Sunday 23rd            Trinity 17**

8am    BCP Holy Communion led by Paul Seymour

11 am   Holy Communion led by Paul Seymour

**Sunday 30th            Trinity 18**

8am    BCP Holy Communion led by Paul Seymour

11am    **HARVEST FESTIVAL**

*\*\* Morning Prayer 10 am every Wednesday, except first of month when shortened Communion Service \*\**

**Readings   *(preacher reads the gospel at Parish Communion)***

**2nd    James 1: 17-end    Mark 7: 1-8, 14, 15, 21-23**

**9th    James 2: 1-10, 14-17    Mark 7: 24-end**

**16th   James 3: 1-12    Mark 8: 27-end    Psalm 19: 1-6**

**23rd   James 3: 13-end, 4: 1-3, 7-8a    Mark 9: 30-37**

**30th   James 5: 13-end    Mark 9: 38-end**



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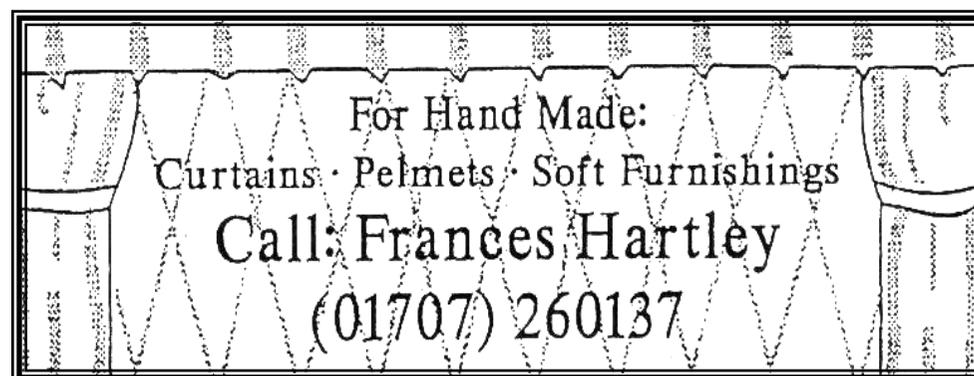
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**Weddings**

On 26 May, **Paul Watson** and **Heather Davidson**; and **James Lee** and **Shona Perkins**. On 16 June, **Steve Blacker** and **Jackie Blacker**. Congratulations to them all.

**Baptisms**

On 3 June, **Edison Viall**; on 24 June **Eli Cole**; on 8 July **Ruby Lawrence**; and on 22 July **Cleo Morris**. Well done to their families.

**Funeral**

On 5th July, **Olive Benson**, followed by her burial in the Churchyard. *See page 10 for a tribute.*

**Social & Fundraising Events**

Teas on an allotment, on June 10th organised by **Marion Cleveland** and **Mary Douglas**, was fun and raised £100.

**The Summer Picnic** after the Family Service on 1st July was great—*see pictures inside back cover.*

**Gina Butler** raised an impressive £305 for Cancer Research in a Race For Life.

Two “coffee and cakes” in June for Alzheimer’s Research organised by **Jackie Spry** and **Jenny Roden** raised £154.

**Sandra Langworthy** has signed up to do a Memory Walk at

Cassiobury Park in September also for Alzheimer’s Research, and is looking for sponsors. *List at back of Church.*

**The Penny Drive** has so far raised £30 towards our Christmas charitable giving. Jars are available from the back of church for filling with your loose change at any time until December.

**Church Working Party**

September 22nd—*see page 14 for details*—please help!

**School Governors**

The PCC in July unanimously agreed that **Nicola Medenis** and **Richard Cuthbert**, Foundation Governors, should be re-appointed for a further four years.

**Charity Bike Ride**

takes place on **Saturday 8th September**. Half of the money raised goes to the Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust, and half comes back to St John’s. If you are interested in taking part as either a cyclist or walker please contact **Lucy or Kevin Earl** on 01707 390497, or at [kevinear1670@btinternet.com](mailto:kevinear1670@btinternet.com) for more details and to collect a sponsor form.

**Parish Magazine** copy date for the next issue: **23rd September**

## Young People Jo Brooks

So, another school year is over and children embark on their six weeks of freedom. Freedom has been our value at school during July and we have found much to celebrate in our weekly assemblies. Galatians 5.1 tells us that 'it is for *freedom* that Christ has set us free'. I love this Bible promise. Of course, its not about freedom from the classroom or from homework, it's much bigger than that. Its freedom from fear, from slavery to sin; its freedom to know, to love and to be loved by our father God and to call him Abba, which simply means Daddy; it's freedom to live our lives with him and for him now, and to know we have a glorious future with him too. So enjoy your freedom this summer and see you at school on September 4<sup>th</sup>!



**Sunday Club** takes a break during the summer holidays, but we'll be back on **Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September**. Next term we'll be continuing to explore Jesus's ministry through Mark's gospel and there are some amazing stories of Jesus's encounters with ordinary people – the poor, the outsiders, the sick; these wonderful stories remind us how much Jesus accepts and loves everyone, and that we are to do the same.

**Family services** continue throughout the summer, on **5<sup>th</sup> August** and **2<sup>nd</sup> September**. We meet at 11.00 for a shortened service of Bible stories, games, songs and prayers.

**T**hen on **September 30<sup>th</sup>** we'll be celebrating **Harvest Festival**. It's a special celebration to thank God for all his good gifts to us and to share what we have with those in need. As usual we will be distributing our gifts of food in our local community, and this year we'll also be raising funds **for WaterAid's Harvest Appeal**. Visit WaterAid's website to see what clean water means to families like Evelyne's in Burkina Faso (pictured inside front cover). The money we raise means that WaterAid can help people around the world to get access to clean water – and clean water means healthy families, the opportunity to go to school, to work, to grow nutritious food, and for everyone to live full and dignified lives. So join us and help us to make sure that families around the world also have a harvest worth celebrating.

*Please do get in touch with me if you want to know more about these events and our children's work at St John's. [joholifield@gmail.com](mailto:joholifield@gmail.com)*

## Olive Benson July 1938-June 2018

10

**J**ames Matthews, son-in-law, gave a fine tribute at her Funeral on 5th July.

Olive was born in Enfield, the elder of two daughters to William and Phyllis Kernot. She started work at 14 and soon met John at a church dance; he joined Mum's church group, at St George's Church in Enfield. He was 20 years old—quite a bit older—but her father gave them his blessing.



Olive trained as a seamstress and worked first at Heals in Tottenham Court Road, then for a company supplying John Lewis, and lastly for Welwyn Department Stores. She loved making clothes for herself or others. She was an extremely talented seamstress and made wedding gowns for Nicola, Helen and Joanne. She was also a brilliant cook.

Christian life was very important to her: on moving to Welwyn Garden City she eventually found her spiritual home at St John's. She worshipped here for over 30 years, enjoying the church community and was known as an '8 o'clocker'. She and John were church wardens and organised church breakfasts. Through St Johns she visited Israel, and could never quite reconcile herself with the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians. She enjoyed the Fetes, although only ever saw the inside of a tent folding raffle tickets!

When her family was younger they would embark on camping holidays. In the great summer heatwave and drought of 1976 they chose to visit Wales and were washed out as it rained so much. Trenches had to be dug round the tent to prevent it washing away! (Nicola still has a hatred of camping to this day). She and John loved their grandchildren very much and would take them on crazy days out. They took them on day trips to interesting places in England, Paris and Iceland, yes a day trip to Iceland!

"Mum was a good mother, she loved us a great deal and we loved her. She had her moments as do we all, she could hold a grudge for days but would protect us like a lioness with her cubs. She has always nurtured and encouraged us children to do what makes us happy."

"We miss her terribly but we are all at peace knowing that she is free of the terrible illness, Alzheimer's disease, which affected her terribly over the past few years. We are very lucky and blessed to have known her and have her in our lives, we will always remember her smile. And as we sit here I expect St Peter is standing there with a very nice new outfit on, made to measure, by

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**W**e have finally come to the very last day of term and I can't remember a busier or hotter summer term in my time at St John's. The great weather has been a blessing in so many ways, enabling us to enjoy all our summer outdoor events and not have to worry about cancelling or re-arranging. We are now, however, all very ready for the relative relaxation of the school holidays – children and staff alike!



**Bollywood** came to St John's in May and saw us all involved in dance workshops and a grand finale on the playground with many parents also joining in a whole school dance! Such a fun and colourful event as the children arrived at school in bright coloured clothes ready to get in the Bollywood mood. *Picture inside front cover*

**Class 4** enjoyed a great five days at Caythorpe Court PGL in Lincolnshire and I had the pleasure of joining them for a day. It was such a pleasure to see them participating so enthusiastically in their varied outdoor challenges and to be so supportive of each other as they attempted all the challenges. Their maturity and empathy really shone through and their exemplary behaviour. Well done Class 4!

**W**e have introduced a new initiative this year of teaching all the older Year 5 and 6 children **First Aid**, so Class 4 were the first class to experience this. They found it extremely interesting and helpful and from now on, as they move through Years 5 and 6 they will get yearly reminders of basic First Aid procedures.

This year's summer production was **Mary Poppins** and was a great success – we were so impressed with the children's hard work learning so many lines and songs and coming up trumps for four excellent performances in 30 degrees of heat! As is tradition now, we have the play sponsored by Quantum Care and have a special performance for the elderly residents of some of their care homes, followed by afternoon tea. Our Year 6 children help serve them tea and cakes and chat to them after the performance.



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**O**ur **RockSteady** music groups (pupils from as young as reception play in bands made up of keyboards, drums, electric guitars and vocals) gave us a fabulous concert this week, topped off by the older children's band learning and leading a worship song 'Cornerstone' with all the children and parents joining in.

A massive thank you to the **LSA** for all their hard work this year and for supporting so many events at St John's, not least the whole school trip to Knebworth House during the last week of term. Classes 3 and 4 had several excellent, fun sessions in the House about Tudors and the younger children did a Dinosaur Trail. In the afternoon we met together as a school to enjoy playing in the Fort and Adventure Playground. A great end to a great term!

We have said our goodbyes today to **Mrs Davies** who is leaving teaching and **Mrs Moss** who is moving on to another school, and to our Year 6 pupils and wish them all well for the future – we will miss them all! Thank you to all the staff, parents, Governors and our friends at St John's Church for your hard work and support of St John's School.

**We all hope you have a wonderful summer.**

**Mandy Evans** Head Teacher

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### **Church Working Party**

On **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> September** from 9am until 1pm, we are looking to have a working party, to put the Churchyard to bed for the winter. Paul Butler has a project for the south side of the church, that needs some muscles, and there are borders and shrubs to cut down.

Alternatively there are things inside the Church that need attention such as brass cleaning. Vicar Paul has agreed to feed us with Bacon Butties and there will of course be coffee tea and juice along with cake. Families are especially welcome. The time you give is up to you, but thought for the day is "Many hands make light work"

Thank you

**Jackie and Jenny**

*The following article was first published in The Conversation, a website that aims to apply academic rigour to current affairs. The author was Casey Strine, Lecturer in Ancient Near Eastern History and Literature, University of Sheffield. The Conversation allows republication if the article is printed in full and with attribution.*



**T**he US attorney general, Jeff Sessions, kicked up a storm when he invoked a line from the Bible to defend the Trump administration's policy of separating thousands of parents and children during immigration investigations. Sessions quoted a line written by the apostle Paul to a small community of Christians living in Rome around 55AD to defend the Department of Justice's approach. He said: "I would cite you to the Apostle Paul and his clear and wise command in Romans 13, to obey the laws of the government because God has ordained them for the purpose of order."

Sessions used the Bible because one of the most vocal opponents of the crackdown on asylum cases has been the Catholic Church. It's no surprise that Sessions appealed to Romans chapter 13 verse 1 in response: not only did he hope to undermine Catholic authority by using the Bible against them, he cited a statement so broad that one might use it to defend anything a government does, good or bad. The problem for Sessions is that the historical situation in which Paul wrote his letter to the Romans does far more to undermine his policy than to support it.

### **The origins of Paul's letter**

**T**he actual date and origin of the letter is not totally certain, but scholars think it was sent to the Christian community in Rome around 55AD. This was a few years after the Roman Emperor Claudius exiled Rome's Jewish community in 49AD. That Jewish community included many people who had become Christians and were connected to other Christians in Rome. Paul himself was a Jew who had become a Christian. After his conversion he began travelling around the Mediterranean, starting Christian communities, and instructing them how to live.

Shortly before Paul wrote his letter to the Christians in Rome, many of the Jewish people who had been forced to leave Rome began to return, the city now safe for them again after the death of Claudius. Paul wrote the letter in part because he was worried that things would go badly when these Jewish Christians tried to integrate back in with the non-Jewish Christians in Rome. Paul feared their earlier exile by the emperor would keep them from being welcomed back.

It is for this reason that Paul spends so much time in his letter discussing the way Jews and non-Jews should live with one another (see, for example, chapters 2–4, 9–11 and 14). Paul argues that the Romans should openly welcome those Jewish members who had been forcibly removed some time ago; the church should return them to their places within the community and honour them. Perhaps these Jewish people were not completely unknown to the Christians left in Rome, but they were returning after a long absence. They were, for all intents and purposes, immigrants entering a host community that wasn't sure it could trust them and probably didn't want them around.



The flight into Egypt, painted by Jan de Beer, ca 1520, now in the National Gallery of Ireland. Joseph sought asylum in Egypt to escape Herod who would have killed Jesus if he could.

Paul is vehement about one thing that those who remained in Rome should not do: conclude they were any better or different than these Jewish migrants. That is why Paul famously says that “all” – Romans and Jews – “have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Paul marvels that anyone would “pass judgement on your brother or sister” (14.10), for “each of us will be accountable to God” (14.12).



**Love a foreigner**

**I**n the 21st century American context, Paul's statements serve to emphasise the similarities between immigrants and non-immigrants, not any differences between them.

Sessions argued that the current approach “protects the lawful”. He also suggested the policy was an extension of the revocation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, which had suspended immigration enforcement against undocumented migrants brought to the US as children. Defending the end of DACA in September 2017, Sessions said a failure to enforce immigration laws strictly had “put our nation at risk of crime, violence and even terrorism”. This particular point makes Romans an even worse defence of the policy Sessions is pursuing. Just before the line Sessions recently quoted from Romans 13, Paul wrote that: *If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.* And just a few lines after requiring respect for the government, Paul sums up his point by encouraging the audience to: *“Love your neighbour as yourself. Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.”*

Paul's familiar language about loving one's neighbour – like Jesus of Nazareth before him – alludes to Leviticus 19, verse 18. While few people today know the content of Leviticus 19, Christian and Jewish audiences in the first century AD would have known it. That text also commands people to create a system of economic care for migrants from potentially dangerous foreign countries at their own financial expense: *When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field ... Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner.*

**T**he command to love a foreigner and to let them freely gather food that belongs to you puts us a long, long way from Sessions' arguments about obeying governments to ensure safety for Americans. The logic of Paul's words might have sounded helpful to Sessions in isolation, but the letter they come from undermines nearly everything Sessions wants them to support.

This front page headline in a recent issue of the local paper provoked diverse and interesting reactions and led to some thoughtful reflections on the nature of life and death. The article it highlighted reported that data from the Office of National Statistics reveal significant differences in life expectancy between residents in Welwyn Hatfield depending on where they live. A comparison of life expectancy of boys and girls born between 2009-2013 showed that the best outlook for boys was 84.5 years in Welwyn East.



**Joan Baraclough**

A nine year old girl, seeing the headline, enquired of her grandmother “how long are you going to live, grandma? Will you be able to come to my wedding?” Grandma replied “I certainly hope so”. There followed a brief conversation about the difference in ages between them and the possible date of the girl’s wedding. Reflecting later on the conversation the grandmother wondered if she should have taken this opportunity to tell her granddaughter something of the importance of living life to the full and in due time going to a better place. How long are you going to live? is a question often asked in the more practical circumstances of financial management. Do you want to invest for five, ten or twenty years? Depending on your age and ambitions, the time-frame may be easily determined and not carry any connotations of death.

For someone given a diagnosis of terminal illness, the position is very different. How they respond will be influenced by many things: physical, emotional and spiritual and to differing degrees as their time-frame shortens. Two particular people came to mind as I pondered this question. Very early on in my career as a medical social worker in a London hospital, I worked with a lady whose life expectancy could be counted in days not months. She organised her visitors to bring things from her home. She then wrapped them up and gave them to the next lot of visitors. She wanted to show her love and appreciation for their friendship and caring, not only in those last days. It also showed that despite her illness she could give as well as take.



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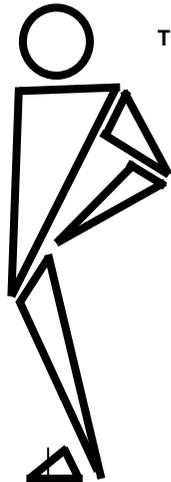
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The other is a close friend, recently diagnosed with a life-threatening condition, whose faith is enabling her to make the most of her remaining life. Travelling to visit friends, staying with her widespread family and continuing to work within her Christian community, she radiates hope and positivity and belief in the good life to come.

Reflecting on all this makes me realise even more the value of our church community. The Sunday services, the fete, the friendship teas each month, the tea in the allotment and bible reading groups all invoke a sense of worship, hope and thankfulness. Growing older often means increasing dependency on the kindness of strangers, be it in the community, hospital or hospice. I am reminded of what was known in my schooldays as the school chapter – First Corinthians Chapter 13 and being exhorted to remember in particular its last verse, that three things endure for ever, namely faith, hope and charity (love in later translations).

So the question for me is not how long am I going to live, but *what shall I do with the life I've got left?* **Joan Baraclough**

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**The Lemsford Local History Group** held a reunion lunch at the Crooked Chimney in June. Guest of honour was **Joan Baraclough** a former LLHG chairman.

Four members of the group attended a very interesting illustrated talk given by Paul Jiggins of the Welwyn History Group on the Great North Road in the 1800's. In those times the Great North Road went through Lemsford and the village played a key role assisting travellers from London going North as it was a convenient place to stop for refreshment.

The **new booklet on Lemsford Village**, which gives a comprehensive historical guide, is selling well and more copies have been printed. With 36 pages of text and many photographs it spans the village from Valley Road Corner to Brocket Corner. The booklet costs £2.50 and is available from Jan Maisey 01707 376716.

The **next meeting** of LLHG will be on **Thursday 20th September** at 7.30pm in Lemsford Village Hall. A speaker tba

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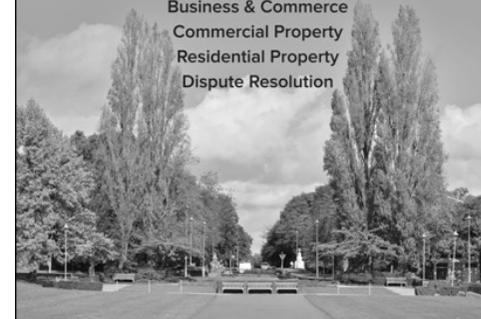
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*Anglican Church, following the Brexit Referendum*

**And finally ...**

*Tim Vine plays with words*

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“I was at sea the other day and loads of meat floated past. It was a bit choppy.”

“I’ve just been on a once-in-a-lifetime holiday. I’ll tell you what, never again.”

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“This policeman came up to me with a pencil and a piece of very thin paper. He said, ‘I want you to trace someone for me.’”



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Picnic—see page 8





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