

St John's Church

serving Stanborough, Lemsford, Cromer Hyde

Christmas Issue



Parish Magazine

Dec 2015/Jan 2016

£1



Top—pictures taken by **June Copping**, at the Remembrance Day Service in November. **Jean Stokes** lays a wreath. **June** herself knitted dozens of poppies for charity. **Michael Hahn** helps his son to place a box on the impressive pile of Shoeboxes donated in November.

Cover picture by **Ruth Sanderson**, illustrator of children's books, 1992

December 2015

Sunday 6th Advent 2

8am BCP Morning Prayer led by John Marks
11am Parish Communion led by Ron Ingamells

Sunday 13th Advent 3

8am BCP Holy Communion led by Amanda Duncan
11am Nativity Service led by Jo Brooks and Mary Douglas

Tuesday 15th 2.30 pm Friendship Tea

Sunday 20th Advent 4

8am BCP Holy Communion led by John Barnard
11am **Nine Lessons and Carols** with the **Bishop of Hertford**
5pm **Carols by Candlelight**

Thursday 24th Christmas Eve

4pm Crib service led by John Barnard
11pm Christmas Communion led by Susan Stilwell

Friday 25th Christmas Day

10.30am Family Carol Service

Sunday 27th St John the Apostle/Evangelist

8am BCP Morning Prayer led by John Marks
11am Parish Communion led by Martin King
5pm **Cafe Church**

**** Morning Prayer 10 am every Wednesday ******

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

6th Philippians 1, 3-11; Luke 3, 1-6

13th & 20th TBA

24th Acts 13, 6-26; Luke 1, 67-79

25th Luke 2, 1-14

27th 1 John 1, 1-10; John 21, 19b-25

Coffee after 11am Services.

Sunday 3rd Epiphany

8am BCP Holy Communion led by Amanda Duncan

11am Morning Prayer led by the wardens, talk by Geoffrey Hollis

Sunday 10th Baptism of Christ

8am BCP Morning Prayer led by John Marks

11am Parish Communion led by the Archdeacon of Hertford

Tuesday 12th 2.30 pm Friendship Tea**Sunday 17th Epiphany 2**

8am BCP Holy Communion led by Susan Stilwell

11am All age/Family Service led by the Choir

Sunday 24th Epiphany 3

8am BCP Morning Prayer led by John Marks

11am Parish Communion led by Martin King

5pm **Cafe Church****Sunday 31st Epiphany 3**

8am BCP Holy Communion led by Susan Stilwell

11am Morning Prayer led by Ian Douglas

**** Morning Prayer 10 am every Wednesday ********Readings** (preacher reads the gospel at Parish Communion)**3rd** Psalm 72; Isaiah 60, 1-6; Matthew 2, 1-12**10th** Isaiah 43, 1-7; Luke 3, 15-17 & 21-22**17th** TBA**24th** 1. Corinthians 12, 12-31a; Luke 4, 14-21**31st** Psalm 48; 1. Cor 13, 1-13; Luke 2, 22-40

Do you listen to Thought for the Day, on Radio Four? More often than not it is pretty bland and quickly forgotten. This morning's talk (Monday November 23rd) made me think.



The speaker was Lord Jonathan Sacks, previously Chief Rabbi, and he addressed the tricky question of where God was in the terrible shootings in Paris and elsewhere. His answer was to distinguish between God in Heaven, who is “beyond change” and God on earth who “depends on what we do in his name”.

When good deeds are done in His name He is sanctified. When evil is done in His name, particularly violence against mankind, who is made in His image, then He is desecrated.

Lord Sacks concluded by urging people of faith to declare this so as “to bring the Divine presence back into the shared spaces of our inter-related lives.”

To check I had this right I listened again to the talk on the BBC website—the first time I have bothered to do this for TFTD.

Shortly afterwards I carried out my daily constitutional—a brisk walk to the newsagent to get a daily paper.

As usual I scanned the headlines of the other papers on display and with some dismay saw the Sun's, shown here.

When I got home I researched the Sun's claim, to find it was distorted.

The paper had commissioned a survey of a mere 1,000 Muslims asking



whether they “had a lot/some/or no sympathy with young Muslims who leave the UK to join fighters in Syria”. 5.3% answered “a lot”; 14.5% had “some”; these two categories together totalled 19.8 % or nearly 1 in 5. However the questions did not include the word Jihadis and there are many other groups in Syria who oppose Assad exactly as our Government does. The Sun's headline seems designed to stoke up hatred of Muslims.

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Whatever your take on the Gospel narratives about His arrival in the world and subsequent ministry, one thing shines out—His belief that God is Love. Indeed He gave His life to demonstrate that good does triumph in the end. So let us cleave to the Sack's view on life and not the Sun's.

Geoffrey Hollis

Read our Bishops' view on the Paris outrage on page 14

News and People

Baptisms

25th October **Ophelia Dean**;
22nd November **Violet Jobling**;
congratulations to them and their families.

New Vicar?

A candidate has come forward for our vacancy and formal interviews will be held towards the end of December. Our two Wardens will represent St John's. Let us pray that all goes well on the day for all concerned. A new Vicarage has been purchased by the Diocese on the edge of Hatfield Garden Village, giving convenient access to both St John's and St Michael's. The old Vicarage in High Oaks Road is in the process of being sold.

Singing Lessons



Shoebox Sunday

Mary Douglas writes: “Thank you to everyone who donated boxes this year. Ian and I took 123 shoeboxes over to St Mark's Parish Room at London Colney on Monday and were told the boxes would be going to refugee children in Northern Iraq. It is good to know where they are going and even better that, now we know, we can pray for those children over Christmas. I have personally thanked the Ramblers (who did 25) and the school and the businesses in Mill Race and The Sun (who also donated boxes) .

PCC November

Gina Butler reported that Accounts for the year were broadly on track to break even. **Kevin Earl** recommended and PCC agreed that a further £585 should be donated to Charities this year: £330 to Jane Jerrard in Pakistan, £90 to Save the Children, £90 to the Children's Society, £105 to Embrace—these sums to be used to top up collections from certain services over Christmas.

Home Communion was being sought for several members who were unable to attend Church. It

was agreed that names of candidates from the existing list of Servers should be submitted to the Bishop via the Rural Dean, for approval to carry out these visits. They would be able to offer Elements that had previously been blessed in Church.

A **Legacy** had been received from the estate of **Liz Potter** which was gratefully noted.

The Archdeacon had appointed **John Barnard** to the School's Governing Body.

Christmas Flier

The middle four pages of this issue are devoted to a flier for Christmas Services at our Church and St Michael's. It is there so that it may easily be detached.

PLEASE GIVE THE FLIER TO A FRIEND OR ACQUAINTANCE WHO MIGHT LIKE TO WORSHIP AT THIS IMPORTANT TIME IN THE YEAR. DON'T JUST POP IT THROUGH A LETTERBOX—PERSONAL RECOMMENDATION COUNTS FOR SO MUCH. THANK YOU IN ADVANCE!

Parish Magazine copy date for the next issue: **24th January.**

During WW2 Brocket Hall was turned over to the war office and it was used as a maternity hospital. Over 8000 babies were born (in fact 8338). These babies are now called the Brocket Babies and have a website www.brocketbabies.org.uk



The conversion of the Hall was due to the bombing in London. On the outbreak of War in 1939, the London Maternity Hospital equipped and staffed Brocket Hall as a 50 bed maternity unit for evacuated mothers. This was well planned as the maternity hospital in City Road London was later badly damaged by the bombing.

Expectant mothers who were willing to leave London were evacuated to Brocket Hall. Lord Melbourne's Room was the centre of the birthing, and the Prince Regent's Chinese Room was used for recovering. The first Brocket baby was born on 3rd September 1939, and the last was born on 27th November 1949.

The Brocket Babies have regular reunions at Brocket Hall and I am asked to talk about the history of the Hall. I get to meet many Babies and they all have interesting stories.

In April this year I attended a reunion and met a lady who wanted information about the babies. I asked her if she was a Brocket Baby, she replied "no, but my sister is" I enquired if she was here, I was thrown by her reply "No she was stillborn". Her question was where are the stillborn babies buried. I did not know but after talking to various people came to the conclusion that in the 1940s the baby was passed on to the local undertaker, who would place the baby in a stranger's coffin. The baby was not registered and no records would be recorded of burial or location.

At my next reunion I met Pauline who asked the same question. She had a stillborn brother called Peter, and wanted to know where he was buried. I told her the truth: that we did not know and the chance of finding a marked grave was low. I offered to show her St Johns graveyard and Hatfield Hyde in Hollybush. This seemed to give her comfort and following is her story.

It was a pleasure to attend the recent 'Brocket Baby' Lunch with my daughter, Cheryl. We met some wonderful people, with interesting stories. My mother, Annie Williams (née Morgan), who sadly passed from this life on December 14 2014, was delivered of a 'Brocket Baby' in 1947 and named him Peter. The baby did not survive and the death was 'stillborn'.

I have tried to gather information regarding the birth/death records, and the whereabouts of the burial ground where the baby was laid to rest but unfortunately all the records are said to have been destroyed by fire. I know the anguish my mother suffered, and it is difficult to imagine that there were other young mothers who also 'lost their child' either at birth or shortly after. It must have been utterly devastating for them to leave Brocket Hall without their child. It is unimaginable the trauma the young mothers endured 'not knowing the place of their child's final resting place. The impact has meant there has not been closure.

The good news is that by coincidence, at the lunch, we met Mrs Nora Pardey (the midwife). She assured me that a great deal of care and dignity was paid to those babies who were sadly stillborn. Mrs Pardey also said she could probably count the number of stillbirths on one hand over the years she was there. She asked me to give her a 'peck on her cheek' and told me, 'not to worry'.

It was our very good fortune to meet Andy Chapman, who gave a special talk to all the 'Brocket baby' attendees about the history of Brocket Hall. Andy lives locally and after hearing 'our story' he very kindly offered to take us on a visit to the local cemeteries, based on the theory that undertakers in the 1940s would have laid stillborn babies to rest in the coffin of the next burial they attended. The evidence suggests my brother, Peter, would have been buried at St Johns.

Further research indicated that *'The area records 62 babies born but sadly died later (the youngest 5 minutes); there is no written record of stillborn babies being laid to rest but it makes sense that the area we visited which was used to bury the stillborn babies is possibly baby Peter's final resting place.*

It is with deep gratitude and appreciation to Andy in his determination to help us to bring closure to this sad story. '

Continued overleaf

I contacted our former chairman Jeremy Summers who is the father in law of Justin Burgess (funeral directors) to find out about cemeteries in use in the area in the 1940s. I also contacted Mary de Soyres who emailed: *'There are 62 entries in the Burial Register for babies born at the Brocket Hall Maternity Hospital who died shortly after birth, the youngest being 5 minutes old. There is no entry for a stillbirth or for a Peter Williams. The babies were buried in the North churchyard at the far end by the steps leading to St. John's School. The footings for the Annexe may well be over some of the plots. There are no gravestones. The first line of graves in the North Churchyard was used for the burial of babies in the 19th century. The names are not recorded. I have not seen any record or mention of a place where stillborn babies were buried.'*

So the stillborn babies could be buried anywhere but St Johns was the most likely place. I told Justin of our findings and suggested a memorial would be appropriate. Without a moment's thought he donated a memorial and offered do all the paper work to get permission from the Dioceses. The only cost to us would be £120 for the application. Within hours of hearing this Jeanette Edwards, events manager at Brocket Hall, offered the £120.

I was amazed at the speed and generosity of Justin and Jeanette and passed on the good news to Pauline, who replied: *'I am speechless. This is such wonderful news. The generosity is staggering. I know my mother would be completely overwhelmed. You have absolutely no idea how much this closure means to me.'*

'We (my mother and family) often wondered if my brother had been thrown into the incinerator. The memories that my mother was able to draw on were shrouded in mystery. All she knew is that she was excited to be having her first born child, but very quickly her joy was turned to deep shock, sadness and disbelief. The baby was stillborn and in her words she left Brocket Hall 'with nothing' not knowing what happened to the baby! For years her sadness, which became embedded in her very being, became a huge part of our lives. There are no records of stillborn babies. I hope all the Brocket mothers, children, and families are able to take comfort in knowing that all the 'Brocket babies' who did not survive have finally been acknowledged and have been given an opportunity of a 'special' resting place.'

I thank Pauline ,on behalf of all the relatives of the babies who died, for her determination to find the resting place for her lost brother. With luck we will soon have an unveiling ceremony to the memory of the Brocket Babies who are buried in St Johns and surrounding cemeteries. **Andy Chapman**

St John's Lemsford St Michael's Birchwood



**Invite you to join their
Christmas celebrations!**

Your local Church of England churches

**Christmas
starts with
Christ**

St. John's Church

Lemsford AL8 7TR

Sunday 29th November: *Advent Sunday*

Morning Prayer: 11.00am

Christingle Service: **5.00pm** followed by pizza.
or come at **4.00pm** to help make the Christingles!

Sunday 13th December:

Nativity Family Service: 11.00am

Tuesday 15th December:

Hertfordshire Police Carol Service: **7.00pm**

Sunday 20th December:

Nine Lessons and Carols: 11.00am

Led by the **Bishop of Hertford**

followed by mince pies and mulled wine

Carols by Candlelight: **5.00pm**

Thursday 24th December: *Christmas Eve*

Crib Service: 4.00pm

Midnight Communion: **11.00pm**

Friday 25th December: *Christmas Day*

Family Carol Service: **10.30am**

You are warmly welcome!

www.lemsfordchurch.org

St. Michael and All Angels

Birchwood Avenue Hatfield AL10 OPT

Sunday 20th December:

Nine Lessons and Carols: 6.30pm
followed by mince pies and mulled wine

Tuesday 22nd December:

Community Carols 7.00pm (Sing-a-long)
followed by mince pies and mulled wine

Thursday 24th December: *Christmas Eve*

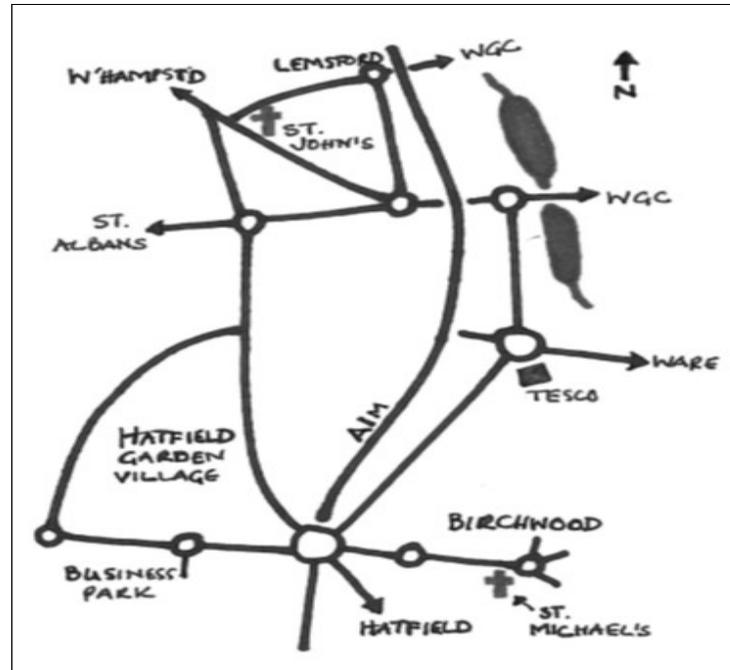
Crib Service: 4.00pm
First Eucharist of Christmas: **9.30pm**

Friday 25th December: *Christmas Day*

Christmas Day Eucharist for all the family: 9.30am

You are warmly welcome!

www.stmichaelandallangels-hatfield.org



Jesus said: "I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness."

John's gospel, chapter 12, verse 46.

Happy Christmas!

CAFE CHURCH

Join us for tea and cakes,
Bible discussion, prayer &
conversation.



Fourth Sunday of the month,
5.00 – 6.00 p.m. In the Church Annexe.

Contact Jo at joholifield@gmail.com

Singing for Pleasure

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Saturday, 12th December 7.30pm

St John the Evangelist Church,
Monks Rise, Knightsfield WGC
AL8 7NQ



Adults £6.50 Children £5.00.

Box Office: 01707 377543

Raffle and refreshments

Proceeds to Isabel Hospice

We are busily preparing ourselves for the wonderful time of Advent as we build up to the end of the Christmas term in St John's School.

Since the last school update we have had our Remembrance Service in church on Armistice Day, November 11th led by John Barnard, and as a whole school we later observed the 2 minute silence at 11.00 am. It is so important that our children are encouraged to think about those who have so valiantly given their lives in conflicts so that our values and freedoms can be upheld.

Our 'Wonder Day' this term was a day of Circus Skills for all the children. A Circus Performer came to the school and led an assembly before working with all the age groups to give them some experience of many different circus skills, including tight rope walking and plate spinning! Much fun was had and new skills learnt.

Class 3 and 4 also enjoyed our annual visit from The Young Shakespeare Company, who put on 'Macbeth' to the great enjoyment of the children. This is always such an inspiring event and the theatre company ensures that the children understand the

story, are involved in the performance and hear and see some parts enacted in the original Shakespearean language – a wonderful, engaging combination. Thanks as always to our LSA for supporting this event and for our termly 'Wonder Days'.



We have had Years 3 and 5 representing St John's at the local schools' Fun Runs, with some Year 5 pupils going through to the finals.

Class 2 have enjoyed a fantastic day out at the 'Bethnal Green Toy Museum' which linked in beautifully with their topic on Toys.



Our excellent House and Vice Captains organised St John's School's very first 'Poetry by Heart' competition. The children embraced this event very enthusiastically and we had many performers from each class – even a brave child from Reception Class! Staff and House/Vice Captains were judges and the whole school was treated to a morning of great poetry recital on the Friday before half term. Well done to all the children who took part and to those who organised it – and to Miss Ng for overseeing the event.

We are now beginning to prepare for advent and all that it brings – the Nativity rehearsals are underway (performances at 2.30pm and 6.30pm on Tuesday 8th December), the whole school trip to the pantomime is booked and the Christmas story is being heard and enjoyed throughout the school.

Our **Carol Service** is on Thursday 18th December at 2.30pm and we would welcome our friends from St John's Church to enjoy it with us too.

Best wishes to all,
Mandy Evans
Headteacher

C J Sansom *Lamentation* **

This historical novel has a veritable storm behind it. The author is a History graduate who became a Solicitor before turning to writing. He has used both history and law in a series of detective tales.

The novel is based in 1546, the last year of the reign of Henry VIII. Matthew Shardlake, the lawyer-narrator is called upon to investigate the theft of Queen Catherine Parr's writings, a confessional book which might be used against her. Like the others in the series, it is a compelling and informative read and shows the tensions between church, state and people in Tudor times.



The storm concerned the Mass, which we call today the Communion Service. Henry had taken control away from the Pope and declared himself Head of the Church in England. He hadn't altered his traditional beliefs though and strongly held that the bread and wine of the communion service physically became Jesus' body and blood. His word was law, and it was considered heresy to disagree.

Church services were still conducted in Latin and, unless you were well educated, you would not have understood a word. Reformers wanted to change this as they thought everyone should be able to join in the worship. The King and his advisors were undecided or opposed and people were burned at the stake as heretics for their beliefs.

Tyndale had translated the Bible into English some years earlier. It was printed on the continent and distributed in England via 'a willing underground' of eager Christians 'who wanted to read the word of God in their own language' (see Melvin Bragg's *The Book of Books*).

The translation was described as ‘this subversive and inflammatory book’ but those who read it were delighted and challenged. They read of Jesus and his disciples taking the Jewish Passover meal that is linked back to Moses and the Exodus. They read of Jesus bringing this forward into Christian freedom by saying the words that have become our Communion Service. (see Tom Wright’s *Matthew for everyone*).

They read St. Matthew ch26 v26-28. (King James Version)

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples and said. ‘Take, eat: this is my body’. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying. ‘Drink ye all of it: For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins’.

Since Jesus was alive when he spoke these words, Protestants believe that the Elements, that is, the bread and wine, are symbolic of his body and blood. This was the crux of the great tension between church, state and people.

There is still a need today for Christians to read what the Bible actually says and then form their own beliefs based on it, not just take the King’s – or anyone else’s word for it.

Daily Bible reading notes are a great way to start ‘going deeper into God’ There are several different styles to choose from and cost between £9 -£12 for the year. Please get in touch if you would like more information 01707 322135.

Another option is to come to **Café Church**, on a Sunday, once a month at 5pm in the Annexe at St John’s; It is a time when we can mutually discuss any faith issues together.

*** Packed with accurate and atmospheric historical detail... In a crowded Tudor field, this novel finds Sansom again at the top of his game. (Daily Telegraph); one of Antonia Fraser's Books of the Year .*

Bishops respond to Paris attacks

The three bishops of St Albans Diocese issued the following statement on Saturday, 14th November, in response to the attacks in Paris on the 13th.

“Friday’s terrorist atrocities in Paris break our hearts as well as opening them to the families of those who have been killed and to those who have been injured.

We condemn this violence and repudiate any attempt to justify it in the name of religion. We stand with our Muslim brothers and sisters, and those of all faiths, in our resolve to work together for a safe and cohesive world in which all may flourish.

These events have taken place at the beginning of interfaith week. One of this year’s key themes is ‘Living Well Together’, which commits us to the task of talking and engaging together about the hard questions including extremism. In Luton and across the whole Diocese of St Albans there is a strong track record of standing together against extremism of all shades. This will be our starting place as we respond to the events in Paris. Meanwhile we will continue to pray for all those who are suffering as a result of the attacks.”

✝ Alan, Bishop of St Albans
+Richard, Bishop of Bedford
+Michael, Bishop of Hertford

**Jesus our Prince of Peace,
we pray that every time a carol is sung,
a Christmas greeting spoken,
a nativity play performed,
that your name be honoured and glorified
and that hard hearts be melted to receive you afresh.**

Amen

Methodist Church

And finally some cracking(?) jokes

These jokes from crackers were voted among the Top Ten in a poll run by an American TV channel in 2013:

Mary and Joseph - now they had a stable relationship.

How did Mary and Joseph know how heavy Jesus was at birth?
They had a weigh in a manger.

Why is it getting harder to buy Advent calendars?
Because their days are numbered

How do you know if Santa's been in your garden shed?
You've got three extra hoes.

Why don't you ever see Santa in hospital?
Because he has private elf care.



Why did no-one bid for Rudolph and Blitzen on eBay?
Because they were two deer.

What does the Queen call her Christmas Broadcast?
The One Show.

Web site		www.lemsfordchurch.org.uk
VICAR	Vacancy	
Churchwarden	Mrs Jackie Spry 57 The Crescent, Welwyn AL6 9JE	01438 715868
Churchwarden	Mrs Jean Stokes 44 Jordans, Hilly Fields WGC AL7 2HD	327873
Treasurer & Parish Clerk	Mrs. Gina Butler 33 Gt. North Road Stanborough AL8 7TJ	372062
Assistant Treasurer (Gift Aid)	Mrs Jackie Spry 57 The Crescent, Welwyn, AL6 9JE	01438 715868
PCC Secretary	Mr. Martin English 13, The Valley Green, Welwyn Garden City AL8 7DQ	334074
Electoral Roll Secretary	Mr Andy Garratt	322731
Deputy Churchwardens	Mr John & Mrs Olive Benson Mrs Eileen Martindale Mrs Jean Mitchinson Mr Brian Spry	325663 01438 715868 329023 01438 715868
Choir Leader	Mrs Carole Payne	329697
Church Cleaning Organiser	Mrs. Eileen Martindale	01438 715868
Flower Arranging Organiser	Mrs. Sara Poole	320358
Garden of Remembrance & Records	Miss Barbara Taylor	329553
PCC Chairman & Magazine Editor	Mr. Geoffrey Hollis g.hollis2@ntlworld.com	265617
Organist /Musical Director	Mr Tim Armstrong-Taylor	0779 6268565
Notice sheet/ secretarial assistants	Liz and Gus Edwards lizandgusedwards@gmail.com	323785
St John's School	Head Teacher Mrs Mandy Evans	322589
Tower Captain	Mr Roger Brown	01727 859059
Transport Co-ordinator	Barbara Taylor	329553
Youth Co-ordinator	Mrs Jo Brooks	256702