

# St John's Church

*serving Stanborough, Lemsford, Cromer Hyde*



## Parish Magazine

February/March 2016

£1



*Cover picture The Lampedusa Cross see page 12*

*Top: Rev Paul Seymour, Vicar designate, met the PCC informally on January 25th—pictured with our Wardens Jackie Spry and Jean Stokes; Bottom Sandra Langworthy was presented by Tim Armstrong– Taylor with her ten year Choir medal in January; Gordon and Elfy Wilson’s 60th Wedding Anniversary.*

## February 2016

### **Sunday 7th      Sunday before Lent**

8am BCP Morning Prayer led by *John Marks*

11am Parish Communion led by *Josh Young*

### **Sunday 14th      Lent 1**

8am BCP Holy Communion led by *Amanda Duncan*

11am All age/Family service led by *Tim Armstrong-Taylor*

### **Tuesday 16th 2.30 pm      Friendship Tea**

### **Sunday 21st      Lent 2**

8am BCP Morning Prayer led by *John Marks*

11am Parish Communion led by *Martin King*

### **Sunday 28th      Lent 3**

8am BCP Holy Communion led by *Sue Stilwell*

11am Morning Prayer led by *the Wardens*

5pm **Cafe Church**

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

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

7<sup>th</sup>      2 Corinthians 3:12 - 4:12.      Luke 9: 28 – 36

14<sup>th</sup>      tba

21<sup>st</sup>      Philippians 3:17 – 4:1      Luke 13: 31- 34

24<sup>th</sup>      Psalm 63: 1-9.      1Corinthians 10: 1-13.      Luke 13: 1-9

**Coffee after 11am Services.**

**Sunday 6th Mothering Sunday**8am BCP Holy Communion led by *Amanda Duncan*11am All age/Family Service led by *the Choir***Sunday 13th Lent 5**8am BCP Morning Prayer led by *John Marks*11am Parish Communion led by *Josh Young***Tuesday 15th 2.30 pm Friendship Tea****Sunday 20th Palm Sunday**8am BCP Holy Communion led by *Susan Stilwell*11am All age/Family Service led by *John Barnard***Friday 25th Good Friday**11 am to 1 pm Devotional Service led by *Sue Stilwell***Sunday 27th Easter Day*****NB British Summer Time begins; clocks go forward by one hour***8am BCP Holy Communion led by *Michael Shaw*11am Parish Communion led by *Michael Shaw*5pm **Cafe Church**\*\*\* *Morning Prayer 10 am every Wednesday* \*\*\*\*\***Readings** (preacher reads the gospel at Parish Communion)6<sup>th</sup> tba13<sup>th</sup> Isaiah 43: 16-21, John 12: 1-820<sup>th</sup> All Age/Family Luke 19: 28 – 4025<sup>th</sup> tba27<sup>th</sup> 1 Corinthians 15: 19-26. Luke 24 : 1-12



What do you make of the picture on the front cover? Every issue I agonise over what to put there and this time was no different. Ideally it should be attractive and striking, appropriate to the religious season, and provoke some thought. Members of the Church community are desirable but one has to worry about permissions and some people do not like their photo in print.

Since Easter falls in March this year, and therefore within the calendar of this issue, the first thing I tried was a representation of the Crucifixion. In the past I have used pictures from the stained glass in the Church, for instance the impressive large window in the Brocket Chapel.

Undoubtedly one of the most eye catching modern pictures is that by Salvador Dali, painted in 1951, with Christ hanging from his cross suspended over a lake (pictured left—not half so attractive as in full colour). This is now in the Kelvingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow and has been voted the most popular picture in Scotland. It is packed with symbolism and one cannot look at it without wondering what the artist was saying. However its shape did not fit that of the cover, and it would have been wrong to crop it.



I spent a long time looking for alternatives until suddenly a revelation hit me while I was shaving (dare I call it an Epiphany?). Recently there has been a lot of publicity for a wooden cross just acquired by the British Museum. The full story is on pages 12 and 13. One day a Curator from the Museum heard a report of its creator and decided to go to Italy to find out more. She was so impressed that without telling anyone in authority she decided to acquire it for the Museum—a bold step.

Her instincts proved right and now the object is being publicised by the BM as “Neil MacGregor’s (the outgoing Director) last acquisition”, although he had nothing to do with it really. The Pope also got good publicity from this, as you will read. I was impressed by the initiative of the sculptor and of the Curator, both of whom took matters into their own hands and did what they thought was right, without waiting for someone to tell them what to do. Could it have been that they were inspired by the Holy Spirit?

**Geoffrey Hollis**

## News and People

### New Vicar!

The Bishop of Hertford announced at our 'Service of Nine Lessons and Carols' that a new Minister had been appointed to take charge at St John's and St Michael's, **Paul Seymour**. *Read all about him opposite*. It is up to the Archdeacon to decide when he should join us but as at 25th January neither Paul nor we have heard when that might be. The Archdeacon is himself retiring after a very long innings—*see page 14*.

### Home Communion

Is now on offer. **Barbara Taylor** has pushed for the necessary permissions and training, and made a very generous gift—*see page 8*.

### Singing Lessons



### Piano/Keyboard

I have vacancies for pupils  
of all ages and abilities.  
**Tim Armstrong-Taylor GGSM AGSM**

email: [tim@operaontherun.com](mailto:tim@operaontherun.com)  
phone: 07796 268 565  
Lessons in WGC

### Music Theory

### Christmas Giving

Nearly £700 was donated to Children's Charities after Christmas. Of this, £111 was raised from Carol Singing, £411 from collections at festive services, and £285 from the PCC.

### Lent Groups

Carole Payne is the Lent organiser this year so do speak to her if you are interested.

### Easter Monday Pilgrimage

Is on Monday, March 28th.

### Fred Olver

Will be 90 years old on February 24th—many congratulations!

### Lemsford Local History Group

meets next on Thursday March 3rd in the church annexe, all are welcome. They are busy preparing for a 2016 display at the Lemsford Fete relating to 'Brocket Hall'. If you have memories or pictures of the Hall do send them to Andy Chapman at [chapman.lc@btinternet.com](mailto:chapman.lc@btinternet.com). *See page 6 for an article by someone who now lives in Hull.*

### Album 2015

June Copping has prepared a splendid record of our doings last year, on display in the Annexe.

**Parish Magazine** copy date for the next issue: **27th March**

I am delighted to have been accepted as your new Team vicar and am keen to be with you. I hope you have had a happy Christmas and New Year and that like me you look forward to the unfolding of events in this new year.

It is customary at this point to say a few things about my background and family: I am married to Cate, who is an Assistant Head Teacher in a North London secondary school. We have two sons: Joseph who is in his first year of teaching Biology in a Birmingham secondary school and Luke who is reading Mechanical Engineering at Sheffield Hallam University.



We also have a cat called Splodge, who is getting on in years and Spike our Collie/Springer cross. Spike will announce loudly your visits to the vicarage but whilst he barks loudly all he really wants is to say hello and be stroked. As for me I did my theological training at St Johns Nottingham and served my curacy in York Diocese at Ingleby Barwick. From there I came to work with David Munchin at St Mary Magdalene in Welwyn Garden City. Here I started some fresh expressions work at All Saints Church on Hall Grove (often remembered as the Diocesan Resource Centre). I was also Chaplain to the YMCA and Assistant Minister at St Mary Magdalene.

At Present I am Vicar of All Saints Pin Green in Stevenage, which is a Local Ecumenical Partnership with the Methodists. I am Vice Chair of Governors at St Nicholas C of E School in Stevenage. School governance is something I am passionate about and have been involved in since ordination. I am therefore delighted with the number of schools there are in the parishes of Bishop's Hatfield St Michael and All Angels and St John's Lemsford and the close links with St Johns CE CMI.

Prior to ordination I lectured Psychology at Hull College of Further Education, I then worked delivering ICT courses and high level support at Lincoln University. As for hobbies and other interests you may see me out and about with a camera, Spike and binoculars as I enjoy photography and bird watching but am far from fanatical about either. Most of all Cate and I enjoy getting away in our little motorhome and being in the countryside.

**Paul**

*For pictures illustrating this article see inside back cover.*

My grandfather, Alfred Henry Brown (1867--1943) became gamekeeper for Lord Mount Stephen who at that time lived at Brocket Park, near Hatfield, Hertfordshire. While he worked there they spent the period from the late 1890s to about 1912 in a cottage in Cromer Hyde Lane, near Lemsford,

The cottage was one of a semi-detached pair at the end of the lane, which zigzagged for about a mile from the Chequers Inn (now called the Crooked Chimney) on the road to Wheathampstead. Much of the lane ran between fields, as it still does, and the houses were mainly lived in by farm labourers and the like, with Cromer Hyde Farm at the end of the lane. It must have been typical of thousands of English lanes at that period, not made up and with grassy banks and hedgerows on either side.

The pair of cottages was identical, each with two rooms up and two rooms down, and was built of brick with tiled roofs. The front gardens were small with a white picket fence and gates, but the back gardens were large. The back room downstairs was the kitchen, with a small range for cooking and a large strong kitchen table with chairs--not forgetting the Windsor chair for the head of the family.

There was no water laid on and no pump in the garden, so when they were big enough this was a job the boys had to do and there was an old fashioned yoke so they could carry two buckets at a time, down the lane to the well. This meant that water was a very precious thing and not to be wasted.

Naturally, there were no sewers either, and toilet arrangements were a shed in the garden with a seat and a large bucket underneath. The men and boys went behind the hedge most of the time and when the bucket was full it was taken to a midden at the end of the garden and in due course dug into the soil. This was the standard arrangement for isolated cottages in Victorian times and continued well into the 20th century until piped water arrived and, with it, water closets. Then cesspits or a septic tank had to be provided.

The large garden provided practically all of the family's vegetables and the adults worked to provide produce throughout the year. Potatoes, Swedes and carrots were stored in clamps in the garden and onions in the shed. My granny was the daughter of a Victorian head gardener (he had at one time worked for Sir Arthur Sullivan, of Gilbert and Sullivan, at Stagenhoe Park near Hitchin ) and she loved gardening all her life.

The children went to a village school at Lemsford , (St John's). It was built by the Desborough family, together with others in Hertfordshire- there is still one at Birch Green near Hertford. There were no school meals in those days, so having walked two miles to school the children stayed all day and took something for their lunch, although sometimes my grandmother would take it at mid-day. Discipline was strict but the children had a good basic education of the three Rs.

On Sundays the family went to church at Lemsford in the morning, the children went to Sunday School in the afternoon and very often they all went to Evensong too. For the parents there was a drink at the "Chequers" "or "The Long Arm and the Short Arm" in Lemsford and perhaps lemonade or biscuit for the children.

My grandfather's existence was to rear , tend and guard the thousands of pheasants, bred for the great shoots for which Brocket was famous. The future King George V was a renowned shot and sometimes went to Brocket, so it was important that everything, including a generous supply of birds, was the best possible. When the day of the shoot came, gamekeepers and their dogs came into their own and a successful shoot meant a good time for all. Keepers and beaters were given their own lunch and some of this went home as a treat as a treat for the children.

About 1912 the family moved to a newly built gamekeeper's cottage in Cromer Hyde with its own well, further down the lane. This house is still there; the old cottage was demolished between the wars.

*For more memories from Jack go to [www.hjbrownhistorian.co.uk](http://www.hjbrownhistorian.co.uk)*

The Pastoral Group is concerned that some of our congregation who cannot get to church are not able to receive communion at home while we are without a priest. Accordingly a request was made to the PCC for lay people to be trained for this very privileged and sensitive role. After agreement by the PCC, five names were put forward to the Bishop, four of whom already administer the chalice at Holy Communion Services in Church: **Patricia Brough, Ian Douglas, Ann Hollis, John Marks, Nicola Matthews.** Sue Stilwell has conducted training sessions for them and now the Bishop of Hertford, on behalf of the Bishop of St Albans, has given permission for them to take Holy Communion to the sick and housebound (until Advent 2017 when it will need to be renewed). This service uses the reserved sacrament – that is the wafers and wine that have previously been blessed by a priest at a Holy Communion service in church.



We are delighted that our new Vicar, the Revd. Paul Seymour, will be joining us soon. As he will also be Vicar for St Michaels Birchwood, he will need us to continue in many of the roles we have taken on. If you are unable to come to church and would like to have home communion, **please contact a churchwarden or any church member.**

It has been my privilege to gift to St John's a beautiful portable communion set which includes a chalice (cup), a pyx (holds the wafers), a paten (plate) and glass cruet inside a beautifully made leatherette carry-case (pictured above).

**Barbara Taylor**

*Calling All Land Girls!* This was the plea put out in Saga magazine by a bold young theatre company *The Lions part*, in the year 2000 following a grant from the London Arts Board to create a play about the work of land girls in WW2. We were amazed to receive over 150 letters as well as memorabilia. So many of these were prefaced by 'Of course, I have nothing interesting to say', but were in fact incredible stories. I don't think I managed to read a single letter in its entirety without being too moved to continue!

**W**e held workshops around the country to meet a few ex Land Girls and hear their stories. One of them took a look at the photo chosen for our publicity and said 'Oh that was me, and that is Thelma'. We then began devising our play. We each identified the type of character we would be playing, and then chose some senders of the letters to interview for more material. When Eve (who contributed much to my character) told me about losing her French Canadian Pilot I was so touched I almost couldn't continue the interview: her words made it into the play, and continues to move me nightly!

The words of these remarkable women, put on stage, alongside the songs they sang, gave the play such power that we organised a further two tours. Eve saw it near where she lives in Oxford: each time I recounted one of her stories I heard her voice in the audience 'Ooh - that was me'!

**T**he play lay dormant until we were asked to perform an excerpt at the Royal Opera House's Linbury Studio, at a celebration of the life of one of our Trustees, Phillida Ritter, who had died of cancer. A producer present said 'I want to bring this to the West End'. After further work the play was put on at The Arts Theatre in 2010 and published by Nick Hern. After the West End we did a further two national tours; then felt it time to release the copyright for others to do. It has been done as far away as the USA and Australia. Those of us who created this piece feel fiercely proud to have honoured these wonderful women who fed our country during the war.

***Lilies on the Land* is at The Barn Theatre from Feb 12<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>  
<http://www.barntheatre.co.uk/lilies-on-the-land/event/201859>**

***Sarah lives at 69 Lemsford Village.***

When I last wrote we were just building up to the wonderful time of Advent and all that it brings in St John's. Our Nativity play was a delightful re-telling of the birth of Jesus through song and dance and a strong Christian message of love and hope from our youngest children.



Our school choir children took that same message with them as they went to sing for a large group of local elderly residents from Quantam Care homes at their annual Christmas party. Our music teacher Mrs Nolan, Mrs Kheirynejad and I accompanied the children to Knebworth Barns where they performed a repertoire of Christmas carols and songs to around 250 elderly people, many with dementia. Our children were a fantastic example and interacted so well with the guests, helping with the raffle and generally adding to the enjoyment of the occasion – a very special experience which we hope to repeat next Christmas.





We were delighted to encourage our House Captains and their Vice Captains on thinking of others at Christmas when they requested to raise extra money for the 'Operation Christmas Child' initiative. Many families had already provided shoe boxes for children in need across the world but our School House Leaders wanted to add to this by organising a fundraising event at the end of term. They chose a Christmas Dress Up Day when everyone could come in wearing a themed Christmas outfit and make a donation to Operation Christmas Child. It was held on the last day of term, and everyone in costumes or Christmas jumpers made a very colourful splash to end on! All donations were sent off to the charity to support their work with less fortunate children.

We are now well into the Spring Term with football and netball clubs enjoying the slightly lighter afternoons!

We too are delighted to have met Reverend Paul Seymour when he came to look round the school before Christmas and look forward to working closely with him when he takes up his post later in the summer. Again we would like to say a huge thank you to John Barnard who has led us so generously through our weekly Wednesday Worship in church, and our end-of-term carol service .

Best wishes to all,  
**Mandy Evans Headteacher**

## The Lampedusa Cross

The picture on the front cover shows the cross recently acquired by the British Museum to record the mass movement of refugees across the Mediterranean still ongoing.

The Museum describes it thus: “A wooden cross of Latin type made from pieces of a boat that was wrecked off the coast of Lampedusa, Italy on 11 October, 2013. The vertical and horizontal pieces are joined with a cross halved joint. The cross piece retains scuffed blue paint on the front, upper and lower surfaces. The front of the vertical section has layers of damaged paint. The base coat is dark green which was covered with a beige colour then painted orange. The sides and back are planed down to the timber surface. There is a small hole for suspension on the back of the vertical near the top. A fragment of an iron nail survives at the top in the right side of the cross piece. The back of the cross piece is signed F. Tuccio, Lampedusa.” It is 38cm tall by 28 cm wide.



Francesco Tuccio, the carver of the Cross, in front of one the wrecked boats that regularly wash up on his island.

This cross is made from pieces of a boat that was wrecked on 11 October, 2013 off the coast of Lampedusa. 311 Eritrean and Somali refugees were drowned en route from Libya to Europe. Inhabitants of Lampedusa helped to save the lives of 155 others.

The story started one Sunday in 2011, at the height of the Arab spring, when a carpenter from the Sicilian island of Lampedusa made a decision to stop making furniture. Francesco Tuccio was at Mass in his local church and among the congregation were bedraggled groups of newly arrived Eritrean migrants, weeping for loved ones who had drowned during the Mediterranean crossing. After the service Lampedusa's carpenter went to the beach and began collecting the blistered, brightly coloured driftwood from the wreckage of migrant boats that had washed up on Lampedusa's shores.

Alone in his workshop, Francesco carved crosses from the timber, shivering at the wood's strange touch which he said made him think of holy relics and which smelt "of salt, sea and suffering". He asked his parish priest to display a big, rough cross above the altar to remind the congregation of the migrants' desperate plight and he offered every migrant he saw a small cross as a symbol of their rescue and of hope for a new life.

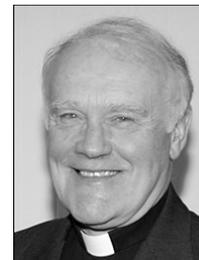
A similar cross to that in the Museum was made for Pope Francis who carried it at a memorial service for those who had perished. Mr Tuccio kindly made this piece for the British Museum to mark an extraordinary moment in European history and the fate of Eritrean Christians. It also



stands witness to the kindness of the people of the small island of Lampedusa who have done what they can for the refugees and migrants who arrive on their shores

### Archdeacon of Hertford to retire

The Venerable Dr **Trevor Jones**, the first Archdeacon of Hertford, is to retire on 31 August. Dr Jones came to the Diocese in 1997, to fill this newly-created post, having previously had a distinguished ministry in Hereford Diocese.



**D**uring his nineteen years in St Albans Diocese, Dr Jones has advised the Council for Discipleship and Ministry as well as holding other roles connected with theological education: he was Chair of the St Albans and Oxford Ministry Course, is currently Vice-Chair of the Eastern Region Ministry Course Council, a former Chair of the Hockerill Educational Foundation and a Council Member of the Cambridge Theological Federation.

Paying tribute to him, the Bishop of St Albans, Dr Alan Smith, said: "By the time he retires this summer, Trevor Jones will have served as Archdeacon of Hertford for nearly 19 years – which is almost half of his ordained ministry. Rooted in prayer, he has carried out his duties with professionalism and with flair. Trevor has a great eye for detail, being an expert in ecclesiastical law, whilst also keeping the 'big picture' before us all. This was shown in his doctoral research on diocesan strategic plans. Trevor's ministry has also been worked out with a deep concern for the pastoral care of those in the archdeaconry and many people are grateful for his compassion and support. He and Sue will be greatly missed." His wife Sue was formerly Head of Religious Studies at Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School.

*The Archdeacon last officiated at St Johns on January 10th. We wish him well in retirement.*

### PREVARICATION and PERSUASION

( a game of truth and bluff "Call my Bluff" )

United Reformed Church vs the University of the Third Age

**Saturday 20th February 2016 at 7.00pm**

Place: United Reformed Church in WGC (opposite Sainsbury's car park)

Tickets: £3.00 Contact: Jean Hughes 01707 267959 OR Jenny Roden  
01707 339141 OR pay at the door

**Lord God,  
no one is a stranger to you  
and no one is ever far from your loving care.  
In your kindness, watch over refugees and victims of war,  
those separated from their loved ones,  
young people who are lost,  
and those who have left home or who have run away from home.  
Bring them back safely to the place where they long to be  
and help us always to show your kindness  
to strangers and to all in need  
Grant this through Christ our Lord. *Catholic Online***

*And finally ..... THE NEXT VICAR*

Back in the old days, long before clergy vacancies were advertised in the modern fashion, a rather nondescript parish in West Cumberland found itself without a Vicar. Nobody could be found who wanted to minister to a poor living, a small congregation in a rather dilapidated church in an areas of high unemployment. Eventually they wrote to their Bishop to ask for his aid. The Bishop replied that he would be happy to help; but could they have a Parish meeting to decide what qualities they needed in a new pastor ? Then the two Churchwardens should come and visit him.

So they came – with the usual list of requirements - someone not too young nor yet too old; good with children, good with the elderly; a keen visitor of his flock, an excellent preacher and of course married. The more talkative warden explained all this to the Bishop at length. Eventually, the Bishop remarked that Archangel Gabriels were in short supply but he would do his best to find someone to go and work in that portion of the vineyard.

At which point, the other Warden who had said nothing up to that point, joined in. "Well Bishop," he said " you don't really need to take too much notice of that list. What we really need is a man of God. The other things don't matter so long as he is a man of God" "Nay Tom" said his colleague "there was now't said about that at t'meeting !"

| Web site                                    |   | www.lemsfordchurch.org.uk                        |
|---|---|--|
| <b>VICAR</b>                                | Vacancy   |  |
| <b>Churchwarden</b>                         | Mrs Jackie Spry<br>57 The Crescent, Welwyn AL6 9JE  | 01438 715868                                     |
| <b>Churchwarden</b>                         | Mrs Jean Stokes<br>44 Jordans, Hilly Fields WGC AL7 2HD                                     | 327873   |
| <b>Treasurer &amp; Parish Clerk</b>         | Mrs. Gina Butler<br>33 Gt. North Road Stanborough AL8 7TJ                                   | 372062   |
| <b>Assistant Treasurer (Gift Aid)</b>       | Mrs Jackie Spry<br>57 The Crescent, Welwyn, AL6 9JE   | 01438 715868                                     |
| <b>PCC Secretary</b>                        | Mr. Martin English<br>13, The Valley Green, Welwyn Garden City AL8 7DQ                      | 334074   |
| <b>Electoral Roll Secretary</b>             | Mr Andy Garratt   | 322731   |
| <b>Deputy Churchwardens</b>                 | Mr John & Mrs Olive Benson<br>Mrs Eileen Martindale<br>Mrs Jean Mitchinson<br>Mr Brian Spry | 325663<br>01438 716162<br>329023<br>01438 715868 |
| <b>Choir Leader</b>                         | Mrs Carole Payne  | 329697   |
| <b>Church Cleaning Organiser</b>            | Mrs. Eileen Martindale  | 01438 715868                                     |
| <b>Flower Arranging Organiser</b>           | Mrs. Sara Poole   | 320358   |
| <b>Garden of Remembrance &amp; Records</b>  | Miss Barbara Taylor   | 329553   |
| <b>PCC Chairman &amp; Magazine Editor</b>   | Mr. Geoffrey Hollis g.hollis2@ntlworld.com  | 265617   |
| <b>Organist /Musical Director</b>           | Mr Tim Armstrong-Taylor   | 0779 6268565                                     |
| <b>Notice sheet/ secretarial assistants</b> | Liz and Gus Edwards<br>lizandgusedwards@gmail.com   | 323785   |
| <b>St John's School</b>                     | Head Teacher Mrs Mandy Evans  | 322589   |
| <b>Tower Captain</b>                        | Mr Roger Brown  | 01727 859059                                     |
| <b>Transport Co-ordinator</b>               | Barbara Taylor  | 329553   |
| <b>Youth Co-ordinator</b>                   | Mrs Jo Brooks   | 256702   |



See the Lemsford History Group's article on pp 6 & 7; Brocket Gamekeepers; Gamekeeper's cottage 1906, George V & Lord Mount Stephens.

