

St John's Church

serving Stanborough, Lemsford, Cromer Hyde



June / July 2025

£1



Photos from St John's School

Left (above and below): Starlings and Kingfishers Class at Kew Gardens

Right: Members of Kingfishers class at an athletics event at Gosling



Cover Photo: Peregrine Falcon - Fastest bird on Earth - see also Nature Notes on Page 29

Being a Pilgrim

Last week, my wonderful friend Su and I walked St Hilda's Way (accompanied by Dora the cockerpoo). The route takes you almost 50 miles through moorland, woodland and farmland, ending at the ruins of Whitby Abbey. My feet are still recovering, but I came back with a deep sense of peace (and a new appreciation for a wardrobe full of clean clothes!).

Along the way, I found myself drawn to St Hilda - not just as a historical figure, but as a kind of spiritual heroine. She was a 7th-century abbess who founded a monastery for both men and women at Whitby: a place of prayer, learning and community, where poets were encouraged, future bishops trained, and kings came for advice.

She also hosted a major Church gathering that shaped the future direction of Christianity in this country. Although she preferred the older Celtic ways, she accepted the decision to take a new path—and helped her community move forward together.

That kind of wisdom, courage and grace feels just as relevant today. As I walked through the wild beauty of North Yorkshire, I found myself wondering what she might say to me, trying to lead two churches



L to R: Dora, Su & Kathryn

through their own seasons of change. Perhaps something like: Be brave. Listen deeply. Hold the space for others—and trust that God is at work, even when the outcome isn't clear.

'Pilgrimage' can sound dramatic—something for medieval monks or over-excitable vicars. But really, it's just about journeying with intention. For me, this meant stepping away from the noise and making space to listen: to God, to myself, and to the quiet wisdom of a good friend.

There were inevitable mishaps - broken down trains, wrong turns,

(Continued on page 2)

Vicar's Message - *continued*

(Continued from page 1)

aching legs, aggressive sheep and terrifying cows. But there were more moments of beauty: churches quietly waiting, sunlit moors, and woodlands rich with wild garlic. Most significantly, there were two unexpected conversations with strangers, where I felt God saying: I'm with you - and I'll stay with you in the messy journey of life, not just in these special four days.

That was my experience. I wonder what yours would be?

You don't have to walk across Yorkshire to be a pilgrim, or be a Christian. You might find peace and connection on a dog walk, or in quietly planting seeds, kneading bread, or simply sitting with a cup of tea and a good book.

What matters is the intention - to step out of the rush, to pay attention, and to be open to what (or who) might meet you there.

Happy pilgrimaging!

Rev. Kathryn

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Jazz on the Island - REVIVAL!

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Tickets are priced at £15 and available from

susan.forrow@ntlworld.com. Further info is available at www.welwyngcrotary.org.uk or on WGC Rotary's Facebook page.

RIP John Marks - Memorial Service

Our dear friend John Marks sadly died on Thursday 13th March morning. A memorial service will be held for John at 12:30pm on Wednesday 11th June at St John's Church. Ruth and all of John's family warmly invite you to come and remember him, and to give thanks for his life.

Please also see Page 25 for how he came to be a Kings' Chorister.

Geoffrey Hollis reaches 30!

The Nature Notes on page 29 in this issue feature, unusually, some good news about our wildlife. It is the thirtieth one written by Geoffrey Hollis; you can read his earlier ones by accessing geoffreyhollis.com/nature-notes. (His other writings can be found on the same site via the menu symbol on the top LHS). Number 29, on the National Grid, provoked our resident Bard, Ted Webb, to pen a new work:

“Today I looked at the National Grid
on the web. Oh yes, I really did.
Geoffrey Hollis wrote that we all should;
he called the web site “really good”.
There's certainly a lot of data,
I had to think about it later.
But I think my daily meter stats
are a lot more useful to me than that.”

The Sun Pub Reopens

We spoke to the manager of The Sun which reopened on 12th April. He's obviously ambitious for the pub and we'll try to bring you more info as things develop, but for the moment I can say: They are open from 12 noon until 10pm (Tues & Weds), 11pm (Thurs, Fri Sat) & 6pm Sun. There'll be a quiz night every other Wednesday, next is 4th June.



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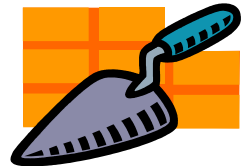
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I have to say it has been rather galling watching the beautiful weather and sunshine in the week after the bank holiday and our fete. Having survived the appalling weather and rain in the run up to our 2024 event we were rather hoping for some respite this year. Shame, it wasn't to be. With the combination of a cool and breezy day, a rain shower just as we opened and competing with other VE Day commemorations/celebrations the fete was quieter than normal, but we didn't let that dampen the spirit of those who did come along.

This year we again tried to have a few new musical acts, mainly around singing rather than bands. We also secured local celeb Immi Davis again to open the event in the main arena. Alongside this our more familiar performances in the church and the school children's singing and maypole dancing were on show again to help keep people warm.

We again had displays and activities for people to look at and clamber over including several well-preserved cars for guests to admire.

Our pedal cars for the kids were a good way to burn off some energy alongside the inflatables, crockery smash, coconut shy and archery. The BBQ, with new vegetarian options, was busy, just not as busy

as the coffee stall as people tried to stay warm. It was also a shame as people missed out on draining our beer tent and the lovely locally brewed beer that was on offer.

Your loss it meant there was more for the volunteers at the end of the event.

As a result of the generosity of the public, our sponsors and the hard work of our volunteers and helpers we have again been able to raise in excess of £8,000 for the school PTA and church. That is a bit down on previous years due to the lower attendance, but also a desire to keep our prices as low as we could despite some of our costs going up.

Thank you again to everyone involved and we'd love to see many of you again next year and it is always good to see new faces in our organising group, when we start planning in November, hint, hint.

If you have any opinions or suggestions on the event please contact us, as it is always good to know if we are getting it right. If you have suggestions please come to me or via the fete's website <https://lemsfordfete.co.uk/> and drop us a note, otherwise here's to 4th May 2026 and maybe a Star Wars theme?



Alice Coralie Glyn Homes

Registered Charity Number: 230988



Alice Coralie Glyn was an author and early advocate of women's rights a decade before the Pankhurst sisters were active.

After her death, she was described as "a woman of word and deed", a fitting epitaph for a woman who spoke up for the less fortunate and offered practical help which continues to this day through the Alice Coralie Glyn Homes charity.



Alice's Homes

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Alice Coralie Glyn Homes is a local charity providing affordable housing in Welwyn Garden City for people over the age of 60 in financial need.

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More information about can be found at alicecoralieglynhomes.co.uk and about Almshouses in general at www.almshouses.org

Easter Monday Pilgrimage to St Albans by Gina Butler

It is Easter Monday so it must be our pilgrimage walk to St Albans for a service in the Abbey. So, as it has been known to do for the last few years, it's raining..... however, it only drizzled a little until later in the afternoon.

Six of us, Mary, Paul, Daisy, George, myself and Rosie the dog set off at 10am from St John's Church towards Cromer Hyde. We had decided that we were going to once again try a new route and to be honest I think this is my favourite.

Part way up Cromer Hyde we turned off and headed to Symondshyde woods where the first of the bluebells were just emerging.

This was also Rosie's favourite part of the walk as she was off the lead and bounding around the woods and bluebells looking for squirrels. (Don't worry the squirrels are far too clever for her).

Then over Woodcock Hill and down into Jersey Farm was lovely, in fact everything went according to plan. To be fair to Mary, she was very well behaved this year, she didn't wander onto any private land and obeyed all the 'do not enter' signs.

Having arrived in St Albans nice and early we retreated to the Blacksmiths Arms to warm up and have some refreshments. Afterwards we split up, Mary and I to the Abbey and the others taking Rosie to the park to play ball, she had been on



the lead for a little while and then sitting under the pub table and she does love a good run.

When Mary and I got to the Abbey orchard we had about half an hour before the parade into the Abbey began at 2.30pm. So, we got ourselves an ice cream and had a wander around talking to the other pilgrims, some from nearby churches in St Albans, Harpenden and Watford, others from as afield as North Bedfordshire who had set off the day before and had to sleep in a draughty church hall part way to the Abbey. We also met someone from India, but they hadn't walked there you'll be surprised to learn!

Finally, the procession started and we enjoyed a wonderful service in the Abbey. There are so many of us that they have to remove all the chairs and we have to sit on the stone floor for the sermon, it gets harder to get up every year. They always ask how far everyone has

(Continued on page 9)

Services

June 2025

1st The 7th Sunday of Easter

8 am HC (BCP) 11 am HC

8th Pentecost - Whit Sunday

8 am MP (BCP) 11 am 'All Together - Pentecost' *
4pm Service of Thanksgiving
& Remembrance

15th Trinity Sunday

8 am HC (BCP) 11 am Reflective Worship
with Sunday Club

22nd The First Sunday after Trinity

8 am HC (BCP) 11 am HC

29th The Second Sunday after Trinity

8 am HC (BCP) 11 am Healing Service

July 2025

6th The Third Sunday after Trinity

8 am MP (BCP) 11 am 'All Together' HC*

13th The Fourth Sunday after Trinity

8 am HC (BCP) 11 am HC with Sunday Club -
followed by Bring & Share
Picnic

20th The Fifth Sunday after Trinity

8 am HC (BCP) 11 am Reflective Worship
4pm Connect@4*

27th The Sixth Sunday after Trinity

8 am HC (BCP) 11 am HC

*** Services especially suitable for children, and all other ages!**

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

Easter Monday Pilgrimage to St Albans – *Concluded*

(Continued from page 7)

walked and we dutifully put our hands up having travelled over 5 miles, but the winners come over 30 miles so we're never going to win that honour.

Also, they always ask who has been coming the longest and Mary is getting close to winning this now as she's been doing this pilgrimage now since 1984. The Abbey always supplies us with a badge commemorating the event and here is a picture of this year's and it sums up the day really, it was pure JOY. The picture next to it shows Mary's badge lanyard.

Afterward the final hymn "Thine be the Glory" was belted out we left the Abbey and met up with the others. The rain is now pouring so we grab a Costa coffee and Mary's husband Ian picked us up, so we avoided the long walk home. I probably say this every year but the more the merrier and why don't you join us next year, we must be due a sunny one.



St John's Church Sunday Club

End of term party!

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Children and Young People at St John's *by Jo Brooks*

Surely not the June-July issue already? That means it's almost the end of term and another school year. We've had a full and fabulous year in Sunday Club, and we still have two more sessions to go. We made boats, bread, paper-cup telephones and Jesus-in-the-manger biscuits. We've played games, talked, explored and experimented. We've learned about God's people, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Ruth, Anna and Mary and their ordinary extraordinary lives. And God has been in the midst of all of it, teaching



next year brings us.

All our welcome to **join us on 15th June or 13th July** in the annexe during the 11am service. The July session will be end of term party time. Even if you've never been to Sunday Club before why not come along, meet some friends and enjoy the party. We'll have music, games, and a craft and we'll finish with a whole church celebratory bring-and-share picnic (and maybe even a rounders match!) [- see Poster on page 9]

And don't forget **All Together Worship on June 8th for Pentecost** (often known as the birthday of the church) and **again on July 6th**.

We break as usual over the summer holidays, but will be back in Sunday Club on September 14th.

- Jo



Sunday Club at the Fete

us his great story of love and redemption. I can't wait to see what

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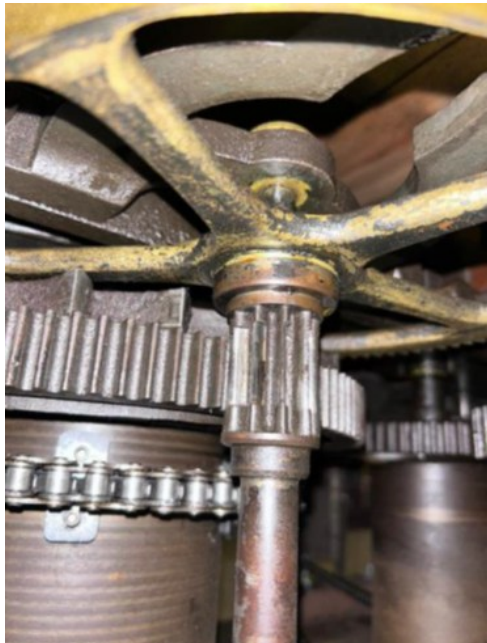
St John's Church Tower Clock – Please can you help?

I hope that you enjoy seeing our tower clock as you pass by the church, and hear it chime the hour.

The clock mechanism was electrified in the 1970s and is serviced regularly, but when the striking mechanism failed some years ago, an expensive repair was necessary. It was with the kind donations from members of the community, particularly those who live close to the church, that enabled the repairs to be carried out so that we could all hear the clock chime once again. The clock continues to keep good time, with only minor adjustment every now and then.

As with all old things however, repairs do become necessary from time to time in order to keep them going. When the last clock service was carried out, the engineers, The Cumbria Clock Company Ltd, identified the following 2 essential repairs that require attention now.

The second wheel pinion on the strike is excessively worn and requires being removed, taken to the engineer's works to be microwelded and profiled to the correct shape and refitted – see this photo of the pinion.



(Continued on page 15)

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St John's Church Tower Clock - Concluded

(Continued from page 13)

The other essential repair is to the hour strike hammer which is in poor condition and requires a workshop overhaul – see this photo of the hammer



The cost for the above work will be £3,270 + VAT.

As the repair is so expensive we have launched a clock appeal, and we are asking for donations to be made to cover all or most of the repairs. We would be really grateful if you could help. If you would like to make a donation here is a QR code which opens a link for you to use, or alternatively, if you would like to speak to someone before you donate, please feel free to contact either Rev Kathryn or one of the churchwardens.

With your financial help we will be able to have the repairs carried out, and this will hopefully keep the tower clock running for decades to come!

With many thanks

Kevin Earl – Chair of the Finance Committee





We have had another very busy half term with lots of lovely things taking place. The weeks since our Easter holidays have absolutely flown by.

Lemsford Fete

The Lemsford Fete was once again a joyous occasion bringing together the school, church and community. Although the weather was better than last year it was not as sunny as the days that came before and after but nonetheless, we all had a lovely time! It is always great to see so many people enjoying themselves with everything that was on offer. As always, many thanks to Paul and the fete team for all their efforts!

Services at St John's Church

It is a lovely tradition that every Thursday morning the whole school comes to St John's Church to take part in services led by Revd Kathryn or Jo. Our links with the church are very important to us and it is always so lovely seeing the children take part be it through drama, reading, leading prayers and processing. This half term all our Collective Worship, in school and church, have been based on 'God in this place' and the story of Jacob with a particular focus on the journey of life, dreams and promises. This week God's word to Jacob, 'I will be with you wherever you go' have been particularly impactful.



Time Tables Rockstars

This week we have had a school of rockstars! Why you may be asking – well to celebrate the joy of Maths and times tables in particular - of course! The children and staff dressed up as rockstars and took part in all kinds of Maths activities including having team battles on a programme called TT Rockstars that we use in school. It was a super fun day with Mathematics at its heart!

[Photos on left: A fashion catwalk as part of our Times Tables Rockstars celebration.]

SATS

The year 6 have completed their SATs. We very proud of the calm way in which they approached the week, they were a credit to themselves and the school. Each morning they shared in a delicious

(Continued on page 18)

News from St John's School - June 2025 - Continued

(Continued from page 17)

breakfast prepared by Miss Ng, which set them up brilliantly for the tests that they faced!

As we head into our half term break, I wish everyone a restful

and enjoyable week, with hopefully some sunshine to help us remember we are halfway through the summer term!

Best wishes,
Michelle Boylan

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May 2025 gave us two special anniversaries - VE day and our local fete. VE day marked the end of the war in Europe 80 years ago and the fete celebrated its diamond anniversary.

The group have many illustrations of life in Lemsford Parish in WW2. The four men and one woman who gave their lives in the 2nd World War, a POW camp in the parish, the landlords of our local pubs, St John's Church and school, a maternity hospital in the Parish and memories of the community that lived through five years of war. On August 14, 1945, we celebrated VJ Day, or Victory over Japan Day, marking the end of World War 2, one of the deadliest and most destructive wars in history. When President Harry S. Truman announced that Japan had surrendered unconditionally, war-weary citizens around the world erupted in celebration. In the next edition of the parish magazine, we will celebrate the end of WW2.

The now and then opposite the inside back cover is a collection of images from 1962 showing Lemsford Fete which celebrated its 75 years anniversary with the first fete in 1950, or was it? [Now is the Fete in 2025 on the inside back cover]

From the Welwyn Times for Thursday July 13th, 1944, VICTORY GARDEN FETE Over £200 raised at Lemsford

Thanks to Lady Brocket were expressed by Mr E. Tabor, Vice-President for Welwyn and District. and by Mr F. S. Sharp (Lemsford). The target £200 was largely exceeded.

The stalls were in charge of the following: Produce, Mrs Housden and Miss Lines; Fancy Goods, Mrs Cansfield of Herts 36 Detachment, and Mrs Pugh; Toys Miss Hope of Welwyn Cadets; Jumble Miss Dimmock and Miss Meech; Books, Mrs Hillyard.

The winner of a Baby Show was Francis Wager of Lemsford.

LEMSFORD

On Saturday, July 22nd, a Victory Garden Fete will be held on the School Playing Field, Lemsford, in aid of the Red Cross and St John joint war organization.

The Target has been fixed at £200, but it is hoped if the weather is kind that this figure will be largely exceeded.

Anne, Lady Brocket, has kindly consented to open the proceedings at 2.30 p.m. and it is hoped that as many as possible will take advantage of the various Side Shows, Stalls, and Competitions, and so make the Fete a success.

Teas will be served during the afternoon.

(Continued on page 20)

(Continued from page 19)

If we ignore this one-off fete, the fete as we know it started in 1950, and we have in our archive from the St. John's Parish Magazine 1990.

LEMSFORD FETE, HOW IT ALL BEGAN

by Jack Beswarick

This is the 40th Anniversary of Lemsford Fete and this would seem to be a good opportunity to briefly describe how it was started and what progress was made during the first ten years.

In 1949 the vicar, the Rev. R.R.P. Rigby resigned the living, and it was more than a year before a new vicar was inducted. The long interregnum was very unfortunate as the already modest congregation became even smaller, despite the hard work of the churchwardens and of Canon Lovell, an assistant clergyman at St. Etheldreda's in Hatfield, who was given charge of the parish until a new Incumbent had been found. Canon Lovell now lives in Essenden and recently celebrated his 100th birthday.

The Rev. K.M. Mitchell was inducted as vicar in 1950 and during the service the bishop spoke of the great need to increase the numbers attending St. John's Church and of the urgent need to increase the money available for its upkeep and improvement. In fact, at that time there was insufficient money for repairs to the organ at a cost of £35. To his credit, Kenneth Mitchell took the situation very much to heart and perhaps too much so, since this was when a long period of ill-health started.

Fortunately, in 1950, a newcomer to the parish became a regular worshipper at Lemsford Church; a Mrs Trench, who had been engaged by Lord Brocket to "open up" Brocket Hall after its wartime use as a maternity hospital. Mrs Trench's task was to oversee the cleaning and redecoration of the Hall in preparation for the family's



Lemsford Local History Group - *Continued*

(Continued from page 20)

return. Mrs Trench suggested that instead of the usual jumble sale, a fete should be organised with a sale of work, competitions, children's races, also teas and refreshments. She spoke to everyone she came into contact with at church and in the village and generated real enthusiasm for the plan.

The first fete was held that year and raised £50, which was a great improvement over that commonly raised by jumble sales. Everyone was cock-a-hoop and this was the start that Lemsford needed. The situation was improved by an increasing congregation with many keen workers. Several people in the parish responded to the challenge and many from the west side of Welwyn Garden City, a number of whom were new residents in the town. Each year a fete was organised and every year the sum raised was greater than before.

As a result, many projects were undertaken to repair the church and to make it more comfortable and attractive inside. Each year £100 was given to the School Managers to invest in the diocesan scheme for the maintenance of church schools and missionary societies also benefited. The church finances were sufficiently strong by 1960 for a decision to be made, to give all of the fete proceeds to outside charities and other good causes and to meet church expenses from the "planned giving" income resulting from the first Stewardship Campaign to be held that year.

The fetes were held in the field now used for archery practice, down the hill from the church. The corrugated iron hut which still exists, was then used for social events and since it held a small lending library, was called the Village Reading Room.

To prepare the field for a fete was always a major task in itself since it was left fallow when not used for cattle. It was either clearing numerous cow pats and cutting the coarse grass and nettles. In addition, because the only store available for the ever-increasing amount of fete tackle was a shed in the rear of the vicarage, now the home of Mrs Bradbeer in Brocket Road, everything had to be lugged to and from the fete field. Later the task became lighter when Welwyn Department Store provided a delivery van.

(Continued on page 22)

(Continued from page 21)

Like now, the day of the fete was always a great social occasion and apart from the hard work involved, it was always enjoyed. There has been a fete every year since 1950 and all have been financially successful. All who were involved in the early years and those in more recent ones are to be congratulated on their splendid efforts, which have benefited the church, school, local and national charitable organisations and missionary societies so much. Long may the Lemsford Fete continue.

by [the late] Jack Beswarick

Not much has changed for the 2025 fete organised by Paul Butler [photo right] and his team (apart from the removal of cow pats).

We have had a fete for seventy five years and they have got bigger and bigger with the help and support of the church, school and local residents including a very special lady, the late Liz Potter who, with her husband Alan [see photo below], ran the fete for many years. The money raised is divided between the church & school and the event is one of, if not the



biggest fetes in Hertfordshire. Paul Butler has taken over from Liz and has proved over the last few years that the fete is in safe hands with him and his team.



(Continued on page 23)

Lemsford Local History Group - *Concluded*

(Continued from page 22)

I leave you with a special image of Lemsford Local History Group who started to have a display at the fete in 2002 and every fete since.



If you have any questions about Lemsford parish history or want to share any memories in general or about WW2, email us at info@lemsfordhistory.co.uk or go to the website www.llemsfordhistory.co.uk



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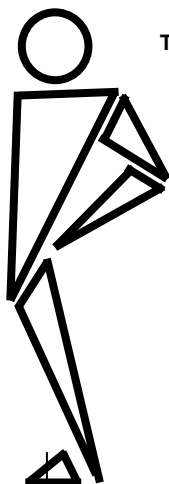


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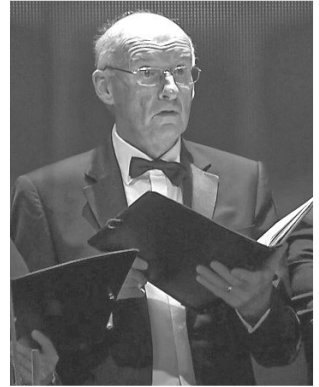
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Memories of a Kings' Chorister by the late John Marks

I started singing aged seven in All Saints' Choir in Hertford. At the suggestion of the choirmaster I took the chorister trial at King's College, Cambridge two years later. This was in two stages. Firstly 120 boys undertook an English and Arithmetic test, and voice trial with the choirmaster of King's, Boris Ord. I was lucky to be one of the 20 boys who got through to the second part in King's Chapel, with its fantastic roof, wonderful stained glass and a huge central organ screen with figures of angels blowing trumpets on the top. Each boy had to sing a prepared piece and to read a passage from the Bible. I sang 'Come Holy Ghost' by Thomas Attwood. Happily I was one of 5 boys who were offered a Choristership starting the following September.



In my first year I served as a probationer which meant attending daily chorister practices but not to sing in services. In my second year I was made a junior chorister singing Evensong at 5.30 every weekday except Wednesdays plus Sunday services, either Sung Eucharist or Sung Matins. All Services were preceded by an hour of rehearsal. The choir was made up of 16 Choristers, 13 men plus an organ scholar.

For 10 days, during the Easter holidays of 1952, the choir sang in various cities in Switzerland, my first experience of foreign travel. After a year as a junior chorister, every boy had a second trial including sight reading and a solo, before promotion to one of the 8 senior Choristers who provided the semi-chorus in the choir and undertook solo work.

Christmas 1954 was a landmark for the choir in that a special Carol Service was televised live by the BBC. A recording is still on YouTube. For two terms I served as first Senior Chorister with more responsibility, including turning pages for the organist playing a Voluntary after a service and being a spokesman for the Choristers. I was privileged to meet composers Ralph Vaughan Williams, Herbert Howells, Patrick Hadley and musicologist Thurston Dart. In my last term, Boris celebrated his twenty-fifth anniversary as Organist and Master of the Choristers. There was a big service in his honour with all former choral and organ scholars attending. The choristers of King's' sister college, Eton College, came to boost the treble line. It was a tremendous occasion, which I will never forget. [Republished from Dec 2019]

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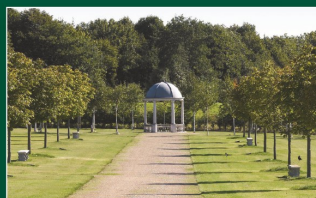
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New Pope LEO & The Church of England

The recent election of the new Pope But - who has taken the name Leo - has stirred up a lot of conversation, not just in Catholic circles but also within the Church of England. While Anglicans don't have a pope of their own, there's always a keen interest in what's happening in Rome, especially since the two churches share so much history, theology, and, at times, tension.

So, how does the Church of England see this new Pope? Well, generally speaking, there's a sense of cautious optimism. Relations between the Vatican and Canterbury have been steadily improving over the decades, particularly since the era of Pope John Paul II, who made historic moves toward dialogue with other Christian denominations. Pope Francis continued that tone, emphasizing humility, care for the poor, and environmental stewardship - all things the Church of England has also put front and centre.

Stephen Cottrell, the Archbishop of York and Acting Primate of the Church of England, commended Leo XIV's "many years of pastoral experience, his commitment to justice, and his deep spirituality." [Wikipedia: + refs.]

That sounds like the kind of polite, hopeful statement you'd expect.



underneath the formal language, there's genuine curiosity about what Leo's leadership will look like.

Why was Leo chosen? Well that's a bit of a guessing game. The papal conclave, after all, meets behind closed doors, and cardinals aren't exactly handing out press releases explaining their votes. But Vatican watchers (and let's face it, plenty of Anglican bishops were quietly tuning in) point to Leo's reputation as a bridge-builder. Before his election, he was known as a thoughtful figure, deeply engaged in ecumenical discussions — that is, conversations across Christian traditions. He also has a background in social justice work, particularly among marginalized communities in Latin America. So, the choice seems to reflect the cardinals' desire for someone who

(Continued on page 28)

New Pope LEO & The Church of England - *concluded*

(Continued from page 27)

can speak to both the internal needs of the Catholic Church and its role in the wider world.

The name he chose - Leo - has raised some eyebrows and sparked a lot of commentary. It's not a name that's been used recently; the last Pope Leo was Leo XIII, who 'reigned' from 1878 to 1903. That Leo is remembered for his landmark encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (proclamation "Of New Things"), which addressed the rights of workers and the responsibilities of capital — a text that essentially laid the foundation for modern Catholic social teaching. By choosing the name Leo, the new pope might be signalling a similar concern with social justice and the dignity of labour.

But go back even further, and you find Pope Leo I, also known as Leo the Great, who served from 440 to 461. He's famous for helping define key aspects of Christian doctrine, especially around the nature of Christ, and for famously confronting Attila the Hun. Leo the Great is remembered as a defender of both theological truth and the physical security of Rome. It's possible the new Pope Leo is nodding to both of these historic figures: the thinker and teacher, and the courageous protector.

For the Church of England, these historical resonances matter. Anglicans have long viewed popes with a mix of respect and wariness, especially since the break with Rome under Henry VIII. But in recent times, the relationship has softened, with joint statements on important issues like climate change, human trafficking, and poverty. There's hope that Leo will continue down that road, building on the bridges set up by his predecessors.

Of course, there are still theological differences that won't go away overnight: questions about authority, women's ordination, same-sex relationships, and the nature of the Eucharist remain points of divergence. But many within the Church of England will be watching to see if Pope Leo offers openings for deeper dialogue.

In the end, the feeling from Anglican circles seems to be one of cautious hopefulness. A new pope always brings an air of unpredictability, but the choice of the name Leo - with its echoes of past popes who shaped the church in profound ways - suggests a leader who knows the weight of history but wants to move forward. For Anglicans, as for Catholics, that's a story well worth following — Ed.

Good News stories about wildlife are hard to come by but you will probably have read about Alban and Boudica, a pair of Peregrine Falcons nesting high up on St Albans Cathedral. They have been there for four years; this year they produced three eggs, which were shockingly trampled on by a male intruder on 7th April. He was caught on the webcam installed by the Abbey to allow 24 hour observation, but only the back of his legs were seen.

It was widely believed by falcon experts that the birds would never return – but they have happily been proved wrong. The birds have mated and another three eggs have been laid in exactly the same spot. You can see for yourself by accessing the webcam on <https://www.stalbanscathedral.org/peregrine-live-cam>. It magically works even at night in very sharp detail and is well worth a watch. The first of the three new eggs should hatch around 30 days after the third was laid on 9th May.

Why have the birds broken with tradition? You can imagine them discussing their options with Boudica saying “Alby, I like it here. The tray is really comfortable and well sited. The Abbey will undoubtedly have beefed up our security (which they have). Why should we always do what our parents did?” As usual the female of the species makes all the big decisions, and so the die was cast.

What you may not know is that the specially designed falcon tray was built and installed by Lemsford



resident Barry Trevis, a licensed bird ringer who has provided such trays on other high buildings in Hertfordshire. Barry arranged for The Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust to partner with the Cathedral to watch over and publicize the falcons breeding. I was told this not by Barry but by a member of the Trust who was until recently the chief guide at the Abbey. Last year the webcam received over half a million views!

The birds are still not safe though as drones have been detected on a couple of occasions deliberately flying at their eyrie. The police are aware and one hopes taking protective measures. They have also interviewed a suspect over the egg trampling and it will be interesting to see if any charges of a wildlife crime are laid. My guess is that he is a pigeon breeder whose prize bird was caught by one of the falcons.

A Peregrine Falcon can reach over 320 km/h (200 mph) during its characteristic hunting dive making it the fastest animal on the planet. Well done to Barry, the Trust, and the Cathedral for helping it to thrive here.

A Prayer for Peace and Unity

***Gracious God, we seek Your healing for the world.
We pray for peace and unity to
overcome division and hatred. Inspire us to be
instruments of Your peace and grant
us the strength to bring comfort to those who suffer.***

And finally some may find this one a bit of a trial:

Freddy asks the Vicar to pray for his hearing:



Before - The Lemsford Fete in 1962



After - The Lemsford Fete in 2025



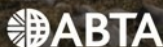
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