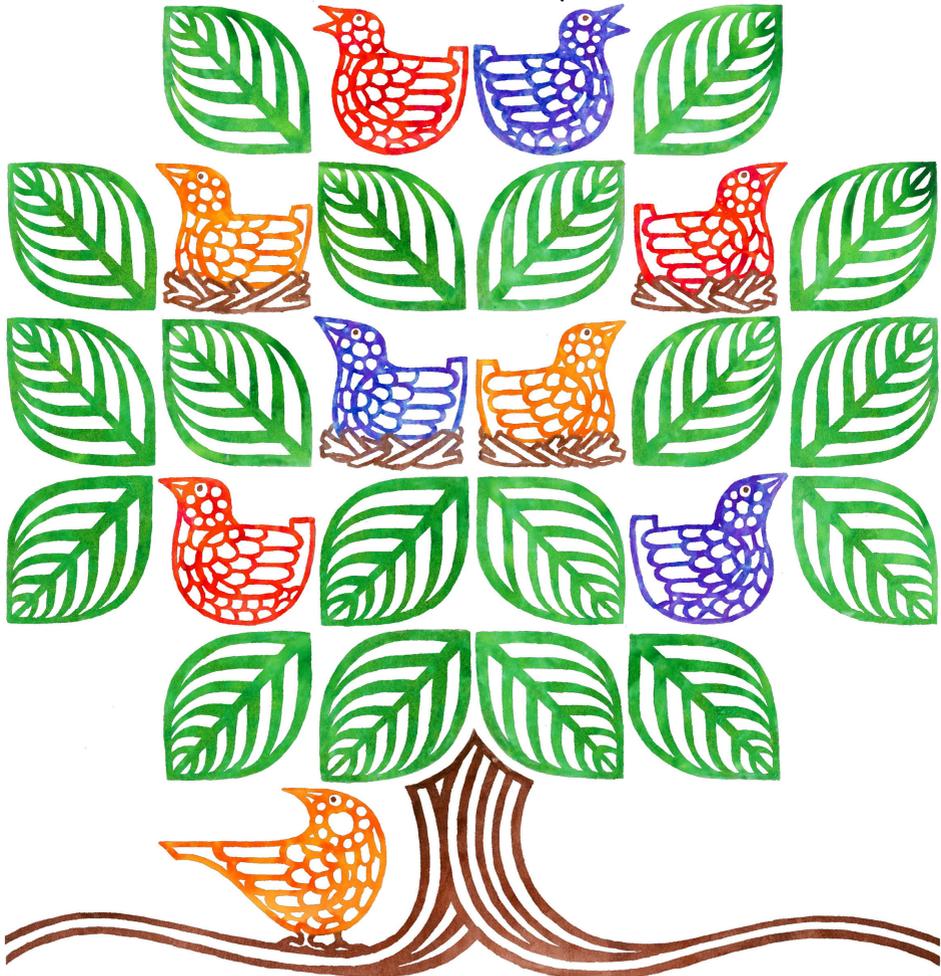


August  
2019

# St Michael's, Oulton.



The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed - it is the smallest of seeds, but when it grows, it is big enough for the wild birds to come and build nests in its branches.

Matthew 13:31-32

## Services and Events August 2019.

### **Sunday 4th August: The Seventh Sunday after Trinity.**

10:00am Morning Prayer led by Debbie Allsop with Jill Pirrie preaching.

Sides persons: Karen Langfield & Carol Keightley.

### **Sunday 11th August: The Eighth Sunday after Trinity.**

10:00 am : Holy Communion led by Debbie Allsop with the Venerable David Hayden preaching.

Sides Persons: Elissa Norman and Stella Saunders.

### **Sunday 18th August: The Ninth Sunday after Trinity.**

10:00am: Morning Prayer led by Jill Pirrie with Canon Peter Baxandall preaching. (Baptism).

Sides Persons: Carol Keightley and Carolyn Woodcock.

### **Monday 19th August: Knit and Natter Group.**

1:30pm: Meet at 1, Elmhurst Avenue, Oulton Broad.

### **Sunday 25th August: The Tenth Sunday after Trinity.**

10:00am Holy Communion led by Jill Pirrie with Rev. Marilyn Zipfel preaching.

Sides Persons: Tim Jones and Jane Boyce.

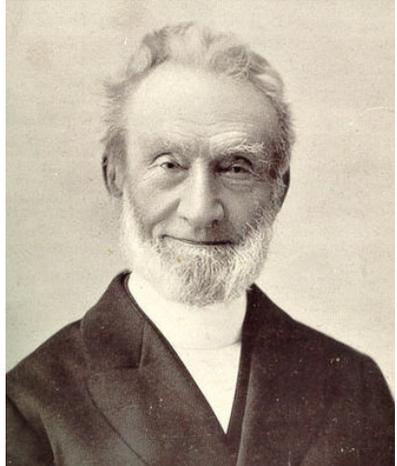
6:00pm: Evening Prayer led by Debbie Allsop with Jill Pirrie preaching.

### **A Date for your diaries.**

The St. Michael's Women's Own Group cordially invite you to attend an afternoon of singing at the church with the '**Rogues Shanty Crew**' on Thursday 7th November from 2:30 to 4:30pm. Tickets, including refreshments are priced at £3.00 and are available from Karen Langfield. (01502 451469). Everyone is most welcome.

## Famous Christians.

You might be forgiven for never having heard of our Famous Christian this month, George Müller (born Johann Georg Ferdinand Müller, 27 September 1805 – 10 March 1898) but I'm pretty sure you will have heard of one of his many schools. George was a Christian evangelist and the director of the Ashley Down orphanage in Bristol, England. George cared for 10,024 orphans during his lifetime, and provided educational opportunities for the orphans to the point that he was even accused by some of raising the poor above their natural station in British life. He established 117 schools which offered Christian education to more than 120,000. He converted to Christianity at the age of twenty when he joined the Plymouth Brethren and became a preacher. Müller and his wife began their work with orphans in 1836 with the preparation of their own rented home at 6 Wilson Street, Bristol for the accommodation of thirty girls. Soon after, three more houses in Wilson Street were furnished, not only for girls but also for boys and younger children, eventually increasing the capacity for children who could be cared for to 130.



In 1845, as growth continued, the neighbours complained about the noise and disruption to the public utilities, so Müller decided that a separate building designed to house three hundred children was necessary, and in 1849, at Ashley Down, Bristol, the new home opened.

Through all this, Müller never made requests for financial support, nor did he go into debt, even though the five homes cost more than £100,000 to build. Many times, he received unsolicited food donations only hours before they were needed to feed the children, further strengthening his faith in God. Müller was in constant prayer that God touch the hearts of donors to make provisions for the orphans. For example, on one well-documented occasion, thanks was given for breakfast when all the children were sitting at the table even though there was nothing to eat in the house. As they finished praying, the baker knocked on the door with sufficient fresh bread to feed everyone, and the milkman gave them

plenty of fresh milk because his cart broke down in front of the orphanage. The last seventeen years of his life were devoted to a world preaching tour. He travelled more than 200,000 miles, an incredible achievement for pre-aviation times. His language abilities allowed him to preach in English French and German and his sermons were translated into the host nations languages when he was unable to use the three languages he spoke. In 1892 he returned to England where he died in Bristol on the 10th March 1898 aged 92.

As you can image there are many written quotes from George Muller but the following is worth remembering in our daily lives:

*'We should not shrink from opportunities where our faith may be tried. The more I am in a position to be tried in faith, the more I will have the opportunity of seeing God's help and deliverance. Every fresh instance in which He helps and delivers me will increase my faith. The believer should not shrink from situations, positions, or circumstances in which his faith may be tried, but he should cheerfully embrace them as opportunities to see the hand of God stretched out in help and deliverance. Thus his faith will be strengthened.'*

George Muller

## **Summer Coffee Morning.**

Saturday 13th July saw the annual Summer Coffee Morning held at St. Michael's, an event which is eagerly awaited by the PCC as it is great way of raising much needed funds for the church. The numbers of people attending was slightly down on the preceding year but none the less those who did attend scanned the book stall and white elephant stalls for the many bargains on offer. The tombola and bottle stall as usual created keen interest. Sue Simpson had a wonderful display of handcrafted gifts while Carolyn had a colourful display of African jewellery and textiles for sale. Thanks to Esther for providing a wonderful food hamper as first prize in the raffle which was won by Sue Simpson with Jacky Makower picking up a £50 Boden voucher in second place. Special thanks must go to Pat and Caroline for so ably heading the catering department. In fact thanks to everyone who supplied items for the coffee morning and who attended the event. Through your generosity we raised an amazing £515.75.

## **New Team Rector**

We were delighted to learn that the Rev. Helen Jary has been offered and accepted the post of Team Rector for the new Benefice of St. Michael's, St. Mark's and St. Luke's. Helen is currently vicar at Cloverfield's in Thetford and it is hoped that she will be in a position to take up her new post in October or November. Once Helen is settled into her new role one of her first tasks will be to find a Team Vicar for St. Michael's. We look forward to welcoming Helen to our Benefice.

## **4th August: 'Sithney - the saint who preferred mad dogs to women'**

You know how some men find women's interest in romance and clothes hard to cope with? Well, Sithney (or Sezni) should be the patron saint of all such men.

According to a Breton folk legend, Sithney was a hermit of long ago, minding his own business, when one day God told him that he was going to make him the patron saint of girls. Sithney was horrified. He foresaw a future where thousands of

young women were forever plaguing him to find them good husbands and fine clothes... the thought of it appalled him. So Sithney begged God for some other job, something more peaceful, than dealing with young women.

"Very well," said God. "You can look after mad dogs, instead."

Sithney replied cheerfully: "I'd rather have mad dogs than women, any day."

And so it was. Since that time, young women have pestered other saints to bring them husbands and fine clothes,

while sick and mad dogs have been taken to drink water from the well of St Sezni, patron of Sithney, near Helston in Cornwall.



## Here's one for all you budding photographers!

Ecclesiastical Insurance launches Parish Pixels - put your church in the picture and it could win £5,000!

Budding photographers could be in with a chance of winning £5,000 as part of a new competition launched by the UK's leading church insurer.

Parish Pixels is a new national photography competition for Anglican Churches in England, Wales and Scotland, launched by Ecclesiastical Insurance. The insurer is calling on budding photographers to capture the essence of their church in a single snapshot.

Churches will need to submit a single photograph and a one-sentence caption to accompany it. The image can be of people, places, features, artefacts or anything that highlights the uniqueness of the church or its importance to its local community.

Ecclesiastical will showcase some of the best entries on its website and social media channels. A panel of judges, which will include representatives from the regions, will select eight winners from across the UK who will each receive a prize of £1,500 for their church.

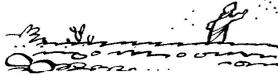
Following this, the public will be given the chance to vote for their favourite image before Ecclesiastical and church representatives select an overall winner. The overall winner will receive a £5,000 prize for the church.

Michael Angell, Church Operations Director at Ecclesiastical explained the thinking behind this year's competition: "There are so many unique and fascinating items, stories and people at our churches and we really wanted to find a way to highlight these.

"We are all aware of the extraordinary items that can be found in the UK's cathedrals, and places like St Paul's and Westminster Abbey naturally attract tourists. But, there are hidden treasures that are much closer to our own homes. We hope that Parish Pixels helps highlight some of these and encourages people to visit their local church."

The competition opened in June, and churches must submit their entries by 31st October 2019. More information at: [www.ecclesiastical.com/parishpixels](http://www.ecclesiastical.com/parishpixels)

the  
**PARABLE**  
of the  
**SOWER**



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



ONE WAS ABOUT A FARMER WHO SOWED SOME SEEDS



MOST FARMERS DIDN'T BURY THEIR SEEDS IN THE GROUND. INSTEAD THEY THREW THEM IN THE AIR!

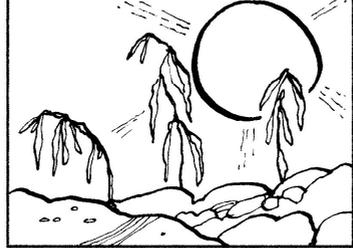



THE FARMER HOPED THEY WOULD TAKE ROOT JUST WHERE THEY LANDED

BUT SOME SEED WAS EATEN BY BIRDS!



SOME SEED FELL ON ROCKS, BUT THE PLANTS DIED WHEN THE HOT SUN SHONE DOWN



OTHER SEEDS TOOK ROOT, BUT WERE QUICKLY STRANGLERED BY WEEDS



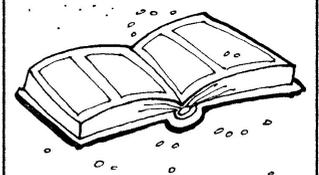
SOME SEED FELL ON GOOD SOIL. IT TOOK ROOT AND GREW AND GREW!



SOON THERE WAS A FINE FIELD OF WHEAT!



JESUS EXPLAINED THAT THE SEED ARE 'WORD OF GOD' AND WE SHOULD LET THAT WORD 'GROW' IN OUR HEARTS, JUST LIKE SEEDS IN GOOD SOIL.



## ***My Favourite Hymns,***

*This month we asked Kathy Jones to share some of her favourite hymns.*

I was born in Windsor in the late 1950's and spent most of my formative years living between Windsor, Knightsbridge, Singapore and Malaysia. I was an army child and was brought-up strictly into a non-practicing Roman Catholic background. As a youngster, I was packed off to church with my brother on a Sunday. I must admit I didn't enjoy it very much at all. It all seemed to revolve around large robed men, talking very loudly in a language that I didn't understand (Latin), whilst walking up-and-down the aisles chanting. All of this took place whilst some young altar boy wafted pungent and smoking incense at you. These men had the power to give you penance should you have done and admitted to what they conceived to be unjust. I was scared, and it didn't take my brother and me long to seek the shelter of the graveyard for the duration of the service. My parents were conformists and therefore I was baptised and confirmed during my childhood.

In later life I went on an Alpha course, (in fact 3) and was baptised through my own choice in 1997. I am a great lover of the psalms, probably more so than the hymns, but even so the list is too full to mention them all. I like those that mean something to me, such as 'Amazing Grace.' At one point my father had a grocery shop in Fir Lane, Lowestoft, and most Sunday mornings the shop was extremely busy. My father would start a rousing version of that song and customers would join in, I didn't know then, that I was that 'wretch'. Not only do I have fond memories of my father doing this, it is a reminder that through God's grace he has given us the strength to carry-on, through our secular life as well as our spiritual being. Have a look at Nehemiah 9 verses 28 to 31.

I also like 'All things bright and beautiful.' It serves to remind us that God-made everything lovely, whilst all the horrible things, such as wars are man-made as he has given us free will which we so often abuse. That aside everyone is disposed to know this hymn, and so it tends to become boldly and joyfully sung.

'Morning has broken like the first morning' reminds me of my former days when I was an assistant manager at a care home for people with learning difficulties. On one occasion I was working a 'waking night'. One client however was going through a tough time and became very psychotic. He was a very large teenager and had the ability to do some serious harm if he was not handled correctly. I didn't feel the need to get the sleeping staff up, as I thought the extra people may have complicated matters even more for him. After what turned out to be a taxing night, he was up and dressed at 1:00

a.m. ready to start the day. This was at the time I was feeling it would-be nice to have a doze for a couple of hours. I therefore had no option but to follow this very active and dangerous teenager around to make sure he didn't hurt himself. At 5:00 a.m. just as the light was dawning, we found ourselves concealed behind the couch playing spies (as you do), when he started singing this hymn. I laughed and thought how human he was, despite all his difficulties. God loved him and he had started God's recreation of the new day.

As I said at the beginning the list is not exhaustive, but I will mention one which I have no tale to tell about. 'As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after you'. I don't know about you, but I wish to receive more of the Holy Spirit, how else can I function and have the courage I so lack. 'Make me a channel of your peace' is the way in which I want to live my life. I long for God to give me the grace to help others, no matter the problem and let them see God's grace. I have always prayed for it and sometimes I know that the words I have spoken to others are not mine but his. And at the end the glorious line 'and in dying that we are born to eternal life' what a win, win situation. Let me leave you with an old verse that a dear friend gave to me in darker times. May the words and sentiment inspire and empower you.

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,  
He sendeth more strength when the labours increase;  
To added afflictions, He addeth His mercy,  
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.  
When we have exhausted our store of endurance,  
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,  
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources  
Our Father's full giving is only begun.  
Fear not that thy need shall exceed His provision,  
Our God ever yearns His resources to share;  
Lean hard on the arm everlasting, availing;  
The Father both thee and thy load will up bear.  
His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,  
His power no boundary known unto men;  
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus  
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.

## ‘Could we challenge Mission at St. Michael’s?’

HOPE Together is a catalyst bringing churches together to make Jesus known with words and actions in Britain’s villages, towns and cities. The dream is that every church will have a Mission Champion who will inspire and equip fellow church members to reach out. Imagine if every church in the UK had such a person, who is resourced and equipped, who could do the same for others, who in their turn will inspire others.

Each Mission Champion will be resourced by HOPE Together to inspire others. Here’s the ‘job description’:

Encouraging fellow church members to be involved in serving others in their community and making Christ known through their love and practical service.

Inspiring every church member on their own ‘frontline’ to consider how they can bring Christ to the place that they spend the most time, Monday to Friday: at the school gate, the office, their sports club ... wherever they are most involved day to day.

Helping churches and church members to recognise a rhythm of mission. When a rhythm of mission is built into our church calendar is gives us wonderful opportunities. Every member is encouraged to be friendly and make friends in their community, to serve as they can.

At Christmas we can invite our friends to the carol service to enjoy being with Christians in a positive celebratory atmosphere.

At Easter we invite people to the Easter Sunday service. Many people in our nation do not see Jesus as a real historical person. Easter Sunday is the perfect opportunity to tell the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus, explaining who he is, what he said and his real historical certainty.

During the summer months we serve our communities with practical projects like litter-picking, beach-cleaning or renovating a community facility.



It's also time to take the church out of the building with fun days, fetes and festivals – again building positive relationships with our communities.

Autumn is the harvest season when we can invite people to a harvest supper to build stronger relationships, or to a guest event followed by a course like Alpha or Christianity Explored, giving the opportunity for people to hear the Christian message and its challenge to them personally with an invitation to respond.

Adopting missional best practice. Over the last few years HOPE, the Evangelical Alliance, and many ministries and denominations have brought together examples of best practice for missional evangelism. These resources are freely available and can be used to resource and encourage church members.

Using training courses. There are a number of exciting and new video-based training programmes available, which can be used with small groups and more widely. These include Talking Jesus, which is an innovative, six-part video course that churches are finding makes a real difference to the way they share faith.

Motivating fellow church members to pray for their community, to speak about their faith with new confidence, to give of themselves in service, to give appropriate literature or other resources to their unchurched friends, and to practise hospitality, inviting unchurched friends to their homes, to events or to whatever would help them on their spiritual journey.

Imagine the impact we could have if one person in every congregation was taking these basic ideas and through their gifts and passion, seeking to make some of these more alive and real in their church.

Sign up on the HOPE Together website as a Mission Champion for your church and you will receive ideas, support and free samples of HOPE's resources to help you mobilise your church for mission. Visit [hopetogether.org.uk/missionchampions](http://hopetogether.org.uk/missionchampions)

## **In the News.**

### **National Lottery funding for churches**

Churches and cathedrals will be able to bid for a share of a £100-million pot of National Lottery funding for large-scale heritage projects over the next three years. And the grants are not just aimed at restoration schemes, but also ideas that benefit communities.

The bids will need to demonstrate ‘real ambition to deliver positive change within the communities they serve and put diversity and inclusion at the centre of their plans.’”

More info at: [www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/heritage-horizon-awards](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/heritage-horizon-awards)

### **Plastic, plastic everywhere**

Did you know that you are eating plastic? On average, each one of us now ingests about five grams of plastic each week – or the equivalent of eating a credit card.

Such is the rather startling news from WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature). Research at the University of Newcastle in Australia has found that we are consuming up to 102,000 tiny pieces of plastic less than 1mm – around 250 grams – each year. Nearly 90 per cent of that is coming from our water, both bottled and tap. Other foods with high plastic levels are shellfish, beer and salt.

Alec Taylor, Head of Marine Policy at WWF, said, “Plastic is polluting our planet... and now we know it’s also polluting our own bodies.”

The long-term effects of plastic ingestion on the human body are not yet known. In the meantime, Britain has taken 15 billion plastic bags out of circulation, and recently banned microbeads in cosmetics.

The Government is also considering a deposit return scheme for plastic bottles. At present, Britons use 7.7 billion single-use plastic water bottles a year, less than half of which are recycled. This means that 16 million bottles are binned every day in the UK.

The Rectory  
St James the Least



My dear Nephew Darren

Since your church is a former cinema, I suspect that were the floor to be removed, cigarette ash, sweet wrappings and tickets for the last Charlie Chaplin film would be revealed. Our marble flooring in the chancel was raised last week to try and find the rat that had died on an underfloor heating pipe. It made its presence so un-ignorable last Winter that it gave me the excuse to use incense.

But we have made an exciting discovery: the long-lost crypt containing the tombs of the Lords Staveley. He flourished in this area, until a little domestic disagreement with Henry II made the family realise that life in Italy might be pleasanter if they wished to retain their heads. The stone from their manor house soon became our lady chapel; an example of re-cycling as a euphemism for theft.

Inevitably, as soon as we had made the discovery, rumours of vast treasure flew round the parish. Long before anyone had descended into it, the treasurer had the fortune earmarked for re-wiring the church, the organist decided it should be spent on enlarging the organ, and Mrs Millington had decided it should keep the flower arrangers in chicken wire until the next millennium-but-one. I confess that even I toyed with the idea of a conservatory with discreet drinks cabinet at the rectory.

Sadly, it was not to be. Our 'treasure' consisted of rows of coffins in various stages of decay, enough bat droppings to keep our Verger's vegetable patch enriched for the coming year and long-lost peppermints dropped by generations of choristers sitting above, as they munched their way through the sermons.

Later that evening, when the workmen had left, I decided to have one last look. Taking a torch, I descended the stone steps, but lost my footing. The now-broken torch went one way and I another. After floundering round in total darkness and unable to find the stairs to get

out, I resigned myself to an uncomfortable night in the crypt until day-break.

In the early hours, I heard steps on the same stairs and in their torchlight, saw it was someone who must have heard the rumours of treasure and decided to liberate some of it. He, too, tripped, fell and lost his torch and in the total darkness I heard him fumbling about at the other end of the crypt among the coffins.

Intending to be helpful, I called to him softly, saying that I'd been trying to get out of here myself for a long time and had never made it, so he may as well give up. But do you know, he found his way out in no time.

Your loving uncle,  
Eustace.

## The Art Scene



Last month I asked if anyone had any local pictures of interest and Rodney Scase submitted this fine watercolour which was painted by Wendy in 1999.

## A Prayer for our Churches.

Lord God, as we move towards a new chapter in the life of your church here in Oulton and Oulton Broad, We pray for unity and harmony among our congregations, may we be steadfast and faithful, and work together with renewed purposed and a general spirit in obedience and humility.

Lord, we thank you for the appointment of Helen as Team Rector. We thank you for the gifts and insights she will bring. We pray for the congregation of Cloverfield, Thetford , as Helen prepares to say farewell and comes to serve here among us.

We seek Your blessing upon her and pray that we may be welcoming and supportive—encouraging and loving as we seek to grow together in number and discipleship.

Lord, we continue to pray for discernment and wisdom—strength, energy and health for the staff teams over the coming months, and for patience and prayerful preparation as we await Helen’s arrival.

Help us to be positive and mindful in our words, our work together and our relations. We continue to pray for our work with children, youth and families, not forgetting outreach to the older generations and opportunities for their ministry to us.

Lord, lead us in the spirit of your Healing grace as together we build for the future, enabling our churches to be beacons of light, hope and peace - a home where all may belong, and where together we are equipped to serve You and one another in joy to your praise and glory.

Amen



## **Glimpse from the past.**

Reading through old newspapers it is sadly all too common to read of fatal accidents on our railways, and Lowestoft was certainly no exception to that rule. The following sad tale appeared 126 years ago in the Framlingham Weekly News on Saturday 7th October 1893, and is headed:

### **Fatal Accident at Lowestoft Railway Station.**

A terrible accident occurred at Lowestoft Railway station on Thursday afternoon. An engine cleaner aged 18, named Arthur Roxby son of Sergeant Roxby of the Lowestoft police force and who is employed in the locomotive department was walking back from the platform to the engine shed along the rails when the 2:50 p.m. train from Lowestoft rushed past him. The noise of the train deafened the sound of a light engine which was approaching from the opposite direction along the very line of rails that Roxby was walking. Neither Roxby nor the engine driver saw the danger which the former was in and in a few moments the unfortunate young man was caught by the locomotive which passed over his legs just below the knees. Some members of the station ambulance corps soon gathered round and Mr. Basingthwaite of the parcel's office applied a tourniquet which stopped the bleeding. He was conveyed on a low truck to the goods shed where he was attended by Doctor Wooden and Doctor Walker, and on a stretcher belonging to the ambulance corps he was taken to the hospital. Both the legs had to be amputated one below and one above the knee. From the first however life was despaired of, and the sufferer expired shortly after 7.00 pm in the evening. He remained conscious up until the operation and regained that condition just before he died. Roxby had been employed in the locomotive department at Lowestoft for about two years Sergeant Roxby is a Framlingham man.

### **The Carlton Chronicles.**

Some of you may be aware of the late Canon Reginald Bignold who was Rector of Carlton Colville between 1898 to 1944. Fortunately for us he was a man who kept meticulous diaries of local Parish activities. Several years ago J.R. Goffin edited these documents and produced a wonderful book called 'The Carlton Colville Chronicles of Canon Reginald Bignold' published by the Norwich Union. Sadly it is no longer in print but if you are prepared to look there are second-hand copies still to be found. On reading the book I was amazed at how the First World War had impacted on the people of

Lowestoft. The following is an extract taken from his diaries for Tuesday April 25th 1916.

‘Lowestoft has been heavily bombarded by a German Fleet. The people poured out of Lowestoft On the Long Road, between here and Kirkley, they were so thick I had to get off my bicycle and walk. It was a very piteous sight—men, women and children all rushing along—some of them went beyond Bungay. It was most merciful that none of them were killed, as shells fell on both sides of the road.

Some twenty high explosive shells fell in the Parish but did no harm here. My curate had a huge fragment fall within 10 feet of him. In Lowestoft, though some forty houses were demolished, much other damage was done though none of any military



A view taken in London Road South following the raid.

importance and four persons were killed. The bombardment took place about 4:00am. I did not go to bed before 3:00 am as Zeppelins were in the neighbourhood. I had counted some forty bomb explosions and had hardly got to sleep before I was awakened by the bombardment. I got up immediately and went off to Lowestoft to see if I could render any help. It was a night and morning to be remembered. One shell whistled through the Rectory garden.

Three of my former curates have joined the army, the Rev. W. Bell and Alfred Boycott as chaplains and the Rev. E. C. Hetherington has enlisted as a Private. Bell is now at the front and has received a Commission in the Royal Garrison Artillery. He went with his Bishop's leave.

A few days later he went on to write; ‘Hundreds of Lowestoft people still come out here every night to sleep wherever they can. Every shed and empty barn is full of these poor things.’

## ***Pause for thought.***

*In this month's edition of the 'Pew News,' John concludes his story of St. Francis of Assisi. It has been an interesting and enlightening journey of discovery about this great man who founded the men's order of the Friars Minor, the women's Order of Saint Clare, the third order of St. Francis and the custody of the Holy Land.*

In late August or early September Francis, who's condition is getting worse is taken to the Bishop of Assisi's palace. In late September knowing that his death was imminent he asked his brothers to take him to the Portiuncula. He is carried on a stretcher, when they came to a bend in the road, it was the last view of Assisi. Francis turned to Assisi and blessed the city. When he arrived at the Portiuncula, he asked for all his clothes to be removed as he wanted to leave the world as he had entered it. On the evening of Saturday October, the 3rd Francis died. As he passed a large flock of larks flew into the sky. The following day, October 4th, 1226 Francis was buried in St. George's church, where he had been baptized. A guard was placed on his body as there was a fear that other towns and cities would take his body so that they could lay claim to the hallowed man.

On 16th July 1228, Pope Gregory IX canonized St Francis. Even King John of England was present at the canonization.

Brother Elias, who was now the Minister General had set about building an enormous Basilica overlooking the plains of Assisi. On the 25th May 1230, St Francis remains were transported to the new Basilica. This wonderful building is in effect three churches on top of one another, with the crypt at the bottom, topped by the lower and upper churches. Francis is buried in the crypt wall behind the altar. In the four corners are buried his closest companions, Leo, Bernard, Rufus and Massio. The Basilica is the Mother House of the Friars Conventual. The whole of the lower church is covered in paintings by Giotto and his assistants. The Upper church has frescos, paintings depicting the life of Jesus on the right wall and those of St Francis on the left wall. The picture of St. Francis is said to be the most life-like.

I myself have been fortunate enough to visit Assisi fourteen times. On one occasion I went to make ecumenical relations with the Roman Catholic Brothers. I had a great friend in Assisi, Father Max who was a Friar Minor Conventual. Brother Derek and I were able to get into Friaries, both Friars Minor and the Conventuals. The Refectory in St. Francis Basilica was nearly

As long as Church Road! All the food was simple, mostly spaghetti and tomato sauce.

In the lower Church of the Basilica there was once a large reliquary, which contained many relics of St. Francis. One day at lunch time I was in the lower Church by myself when two American visitors came in. They made their way to the reliquary and studied it for a few moments.



After a while they noticed me and assuming that I was

Italian came across and in a loud voice said, “Can you please tell us what’s in the glass cabinet? I said in English, “They are the relics of St. Francis.” They turned to one another and said, “Gee isn’t his English perfect, you’d almost think he was English!” I just kept quiet.

It was my job while we were in Assisi to get the bread each day. The baker asked me where I came from in England. At that time I was based in Birmingham and told her so. She looked at me smiling broadly and said “You must know my sister, she lives in Birmingham.”

Assisi is one of the most beautiful places on earth, well worth a visit. I would love to go again, but alas my travelling days are over.

Next time I will tell you of a modern day St. Francis.

### **Sayings of St. Francis.**

“Lord, make me an Instrument of Thy Peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon...

“Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith.

We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way.” Francis of Assisi

## **'A Long Walk.**

'I like long walks,' Noel Coward is said to have once quipped, 'especially when they're taken by people I dislike.' Typical Coward wit but long walks seem to be an integral part of our Christian lives. Life it is said is the walk 'from the cradle to the grave'. I found the following poem by Royston Allen which talks of that remarkable journey that Cleopas and an unnamed disciple took while walking on the road to Emmaus.

### **Walking the Emmaus Road**

Their eyes were downcast and the pace was slow.  
Why these things had happened they did not know.  
On their shoulders they bore grief's heavy load  
as they walked that long Emmaus Road.

A stranger joined them as they walked that way.  
Slowed His pace to hear what they had to say.  
Step by step He walked along with them there  
and from the scriptures He began to share.

Grief stricken and saddened they did not know  
who it was that joined them walking so slow.  
In fellowship sweet He expounded God's word  
and their hearts glowed at everything they heard.

From Moses through the Prophets He made known  
of an open tomb and a heavenly throne.  
They listened carefully while this Man talked  
as together the Emmaus Road they walked.

"Did not the Christ have to suffer," He said  
"and after to be raised up from the dead?"  
As they approached the place they were staying.  
He acted as though He would not go in.

"The day is far spent, stay with us," they said  
and He entered their house and broke some bread.  
At once their eyes were opened and they knew  
it was Jesus, but He vanished from their view.

"Did not our heart burn within us," they said  
and up they got and off to Jerusalem sped.  
Found the disciples and said "It is true."  
"The Lord has risen and we've seen Him too."

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## **FINAL THOUGHT.**

By a roundabout route, via Hereford Diocesan Office in Ludlow, I received a request to contact a Robin Keightley. The office rightly refused to divulge information. Did I know a Robin Keightley? "Yes, for 48 years!" It was either good news or bad news, or more likely he wanted something. Yes – an article for St Michael's Pew News! One of the blessings of retirement as a Parish Priest is not having to meet a deadline for the monthly parish mag.. But Robin is a good friend so here goes:...The request came through on July 15, St Swithin's Day, so the theme is Rain.

Most of the couples I have married over the years seem fearful that it would rain on their wedding day, so I often gave them my version of a verse by the Revd John Killinger.

So it might rain on your wedding day?

Get over it

Our planet is 7 / 10ths water,

If it weren't,

We probably wouldn't  
be here.

Our bodies are 98% wa-  
ter,

If they weren't we'd be  
toast.

The Bible says that the  
rain falls on the just and  
unjust alike.



Does this mean that we might be unjust, and therefore lucky?

In the Middle East, rain is almost always in short supply.

Are they unlucky or unjust?

So if it rains on your wedding day (or on your Church Fete/Garden Party/BBQ) ?

Water is essential to life.

We drink it to survive, we bathe in it for cleanliness or for fun, and we baptise our children in it as a sign of God's blessing.

So, if it should happen to rain on your wedding day,

It doesn't mean you've had bad luck, or should have waited for a sunny day.

It means that you are being married under the sign of God's blessing.

You and your partner are being symbolically sprinkled from above to remind you that your life together is a precious gift from heaven

Which you are about to share with somebody very special to you.

So praise God from whom all blessings flow

And from whom all flowing's bless.

John Simpson

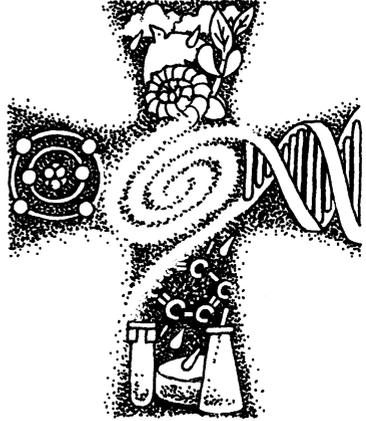
## **Keeping Calm in the Storm**

Staying with water one of the most famous stories about Jesus is the calming of the storm (Luke 8:22-25). Of course, anyone could say that the wind stopped suddenly of its own accord, but the disciples were not fooled. They had seen a number of these 'coincidences' in Jesus' ministry, and they weren't about to ignore this one. Jesus had calmed the waves with only His words. Wasn't this an act of God? Who else could be in complete control of creation?

Jesus dealt graciously with the very pressing and practical issue of the raging storm before He did a bit of teaching, asking His followers "Where is

your faith?" It's not surprising that they were scared, given the circumstances, but clearly Jesus expected better of them. He had already been teaching them for some time, and clearly knew they were ready to trust Him.

In similar circumstances, Christians often do several things in quick succession. We start by panicking and being afraid. After a while we might remember what we know about God's character and pray for help, trusting that whatever happens He will help us to handle it. Most often, we don't get the storm-calming effect when we ask for it, but battling on with faith and God's help is much easier than trying to keep going in a panic.



'Peace' in this kind of situation is a very active holding on to what we know about God. The difference between trusting and not trusting can be like night and day in terms of stress levels. I have found that it can make the difference between unmanageable stress and something that stretches me and teaches me something new.

Knowing some science can help us to trust God. A Being who created the whole universe, sustaining the wonderfully creative processes that produced diverse life on earth, must be both extremely powerful and extremely wise. The God who can both calm the waves and walk on them must be in complete control of the things He made. When this knowledge goes hand in hand with experience of God's intimate love for us and care for us in every situation that we find ourselves in, I am reassured that He's got things in hand. I will always need help from others to pray faithfully in stormy situations, but hopefully I've seen enough now not to panic for too long.

Time (and my closest friends) will tell!



“Be of good cheer, do not think of today’s failures, but of the success that may come tomorrow. You have set yourselves a difficult task but you will succeed if you persevere; and you will find joy in overcoming obstacles. Remember, no effort that we make to attain something better is ever wasted.”

Helen Keller

If you have any contributions for the next monthly edition of the ‘Pew News’ please send your material to Robin Keightley

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