

POEM FOR THE MONTH

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light;
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rimes
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

NEWS FROM THE PARISHES

ASHBOCKING

As 2017 arrives, we can look back at a busy year in Ashbocking. We have had three baptisms and the start of a baby group, which at present has an all boy membership! It is a lovely way for mums and tots to meet and is held on the last Friday of the month. For the venues please contact Stephanie Andrews-Pearce on 07795295588.

There was an away-day at Otley Hall which was enjoyed by members of both Ashbocking and Swilland churches, and led to the start of a

five-year plan for the development of our ministry. We identified a need for toilets and tea points in the churches to enable them to be used more effectively, and fundraising and planning have started to make these possible. Ashbocking and Swilland have become companion churches, which is working very well and has formed a good bond between the two villages.

Ashbocking's big fundraising event in 2016 was a fun-filled quiz night, held in the church with BBQ and bar. Although it poured with rain, everyone had a good time and it was deemed a great success. This also confirmed the necessity for a toilet! £2000 was raised, a brilliant start, but fundraising will continue.

There was a confirmation service and a renewal of baptismal vows and after training as lay elders, two of us were commissioned at the harvest service by Archdeacon Ian.

David Bendall stood down as PCC vice-chair after many years of service. Brenda and Bernard Mitchell have left Ashbocking and now live in Claydon. Brenda had been churchwarden and also arranged the church flowers. We hope this will not be goodbye completely, but we do wish them much happiness in their new home.

Our house groups have been very successful and numbers attending have grown. The groups will continue in 2017, so if you wish to join please contact Jan and Jon Bates (892605) for the Wednesday group who meet at Manor Farm at 10:00am on the first and third Wednesday of the month, or Catherine Beaumont for the Wednesday evening group, starting on January 11th at 7:30pm at John and Linda Pollard's home, Hawthorns, The Green.

The Christmas season started with a gathering of church members at Otley Hall for mulled wine and nibbles. It was a delightful evening seeing friends and enjoying the decorations in such a wonderful setting. Thank you, Catherine.

This was followed by a rehearsal for the carol service led by Marcus Peel who has only just arrived in Ashbocking with his wife Louise. Marcus played keyboard accompanied by Glenn and Mel with their guitars, and the newly-formed choir were tutored and even managed a descant or two. This was also good practice for carol singing through the village, which started at the Crockery Barn and travelled down to Nelson Close. There were people on foot singing and knocking on doors, and other singers, including Marcus playing his keyboard, on Andrew Gaught's trailer. I think we got to most people, but apologies if we didn't, as it was difficult to get a tractor and trailer down some of the narrower driveways. We ended up meeting the Swilland singers for a few carols and a drink in the Moon and Mushroom. Together we raised £250 for Christian Aid.

All this practice was useful for the carol service on December 18th. The church looked wonderful, beautifully decorated and in candle-light. Over 100 people, including 19 youngsters, enjoyed carols, readings, and prayers. Children were dressed as shepherds, angels and of course Mary and Joseph, and sang Away in a Manger. The service was followed by mince pies, sausage rolls and mulled wine. A big thank you to all who helped to make it a wonderful service - Linda Ellis and her team for the flowers and decorations, those who cleaned the church, and those who supplied food and drink, as well as readers, musicians and choir.

The Nativity from scratch on Christmas Day was a huge success but quite different as most parts were played by teenagers and young adults. The only small ones involved were the Andrews–Pearce children, who charmingly played a lamb, a shepherd and a reluctant angel. Thank you to all who willingly volunteered and made the service so special, including the readers too who read with such sincerity.

Sadly, Adine's dear father died before Christmas, and our thoughts and prayers are with her, Kevin and their family at this time.

Thank you to Jonathan Bell for refurbishing our church gates and fashioning the new oak posts which were installed by Brian Childs. Thank you to Andrew Gaught for making a pair of gate protectors and to John Pollard for fitting them and coordinating all the work. Thank you to Kevin Balaam, who kindly repaired the rotten floor in the choir stalls, saving the church £2,000.

John and I met the church architect, Nick Jacob, to discuss the long-talked of loo and kitchenette, amongst other things. The idea is feasible, but will be expensive. We are awaiting his report. The generosity of our community with its support in fundraising is vital and also with people so willing to give their time and expertise we are confident that this project will happen. Hopefully this will give us a community space for activities for generations to come.

Our next service is a family service for Epiphany, celebrating the arrival of the Three Wise Men, on January 8th, at 11:00am. All are welcome.

Finally a huge thank you to all who have supported us throughout 2016 and we wish everyone a very happy and peaceful New Year.

Linda Pollard

Church Cleaning John and Linda Pollard

CLOPTON

Over thirty people attended the Christmas coffee-morning hosted by Della Hughes and Anne Pryke. It was great to see some new people and thank you to everyone who brought food. The January coffee-morning will be in the village hall on Wednesday 18th January from 10am until noon and Linda and Bob Tye will be the hosts.

Door to door carol-singing went really well this year and it was not too cold! Ten or so singers in great voice visited Shop Road, Rouse Hall, Martins Lane, Snipe Farm Road and part of Manor Road,

raising £186.32 for the East Anglian Children's Hospice in Ipswich. Thank you to those who donated so generously, to the singers and to the Schurrs for restoring us afterwards with very welcome and delicious mince pies and mulled wine.

Over a hundred people attended the candlelight carol service - the first time that we have needed extra chairs to seat everyone. The church looked wonderful - thank you to the people who decorated it so beautifully. Jane Hall led the service. Helen Jay, the organist, said it was the best and loudest singing she had ever heard in Clopton! The collection for Syrian refugees and amounted to £263.21. We enjoyed mulled wine and refreshments afterwards.

Don't forget we meet on the first Wednesday of every month for hobbies and chat from 10am until noon. We are a very friendly group and you do not have to live in Clopton to join us. A small charge of £2 covers the cost of hiring the hall and refreshments.

We wish you all a very happy and healthy 2017.

Doris Main

Church cleaning
Church flowers

Doris Main
Charmaine Williams

OTLEY

Christmas Day was unseasonably mild, with record temperatures, and five days later the molehills in the churchyard are coated in frost and the pond is frozen. This is England!

Christmas celebrations began with the candlelit service of lessons and carols, taken by Jane. The church was beautifully decorated with flower arrangements, candle sconces, the Nativity figures, and an immensely tall tree provided by the Ellis family. Sue Wilkins's choir seemed better than ever, with a very high standard of singing, and one of their anthems was Sue's new composition, a lovely lullaby

"Hush my dear, lie still and slumber". The service was followed by refreshments of coffee and mince pies, and the collection of £233 has been divided equally between The Children's Society and Age UK.

The church was full with families and children for the crib service on Christmas Eve, led by Jane and Catherine, with technical support from Mike Bullock. The Nativity was re-enacted, Rachel, Brendan and Isabel Green taking the parts of Mary, Joseph and the Christ-child. The collection of £187 was sent to FIND. Later, Midnight Communion, with its own special atmosphere and led by Canon Graham Hedger, was attended by about thirty people, taking us into Christmas morning.

THANK YOU to everyone involved in the celebrations at church, and the preparation for them, in whatever capacity. And thank you, too, to James Green who provided the illuminated star at the top of the tower, which was clearly visible to people coming up the church path, and could also be seen from the centre of the village.

The Christmas Draw earlier in December raised £700 for church funds, a marvellous amount. Thank you to Ruth Farnhill for co-ordinating everything and to everyone who sold tickets, notably the magazine distributors, those who bought them and those who donated prizes. This event is part of a coffee-morning, with the most delicious cakes, so we hope more people will attend next year.

Thank you to all those who kindly hosted a coffee-morning in 2016. To remind you, monthly coffee-mornings have reverted the second Thursday of the month, and there will be some new venues in 2017. The first of the year will be held on Thursday 12th January at Karin and Brian Upson's, 16 Spring Park.

We are sad to report that Phyllis Rowell has died at the age of 97. Her husband, Frank, was Rector of Clopton with Otley (and, later, Ashbocking and Swilland) from 1965 to 1988, and they lived at the Rectory in Clopton before retiring to Melton. Phyllis was very talented

- an expert at church embroidery, she made beautiful altar frontals for Otley church, as well as lectern falls and the large wall hanging in the chancel; she also played the organ and sang in the choir. We send our condolences to Anne and Simon and their families. A service of thanksgiving for her life will take place at Otley at 2.30pm on Wednesday 11th January.

Advance notice - Junior TOPS' next production is "Treasure Island" on 10th and 11th February, so do make a note of the date.

Finally, a very happy and healthy New Year to you all.

Rose Rogerson

Village diary:

26th Jan. Community Lunch at The White Hart

Church Cleaning: David and Tess Papworth

Sidepersons:

15th January	9.30am	Holy Communion	Penny Clark
29th January	11.00am	Benefice Service	Ruthie Bullock

Otley Dinner Dance

The dinner dance on Saturday 10th December was another successful evening, attended by around 70 people and raising some £850 for the Community Council. The tables were dressed with a black and gold theme this year. A welcome drink of Buck's Fizz was followed by a two-course Christmas meal prepared by Anglia Catering. Dessert was a range of puddings kindly made by those attending. David Montgomery won the raffle grand prize of two VIP tickets for the Suffolk Show 2017. Other wonderful prizes had been donated by local businesses and were greatly appreciated. Ed provided the disco and had people up on their feet dancing late into the evening. A huge thank you to James Green and Amy Cranfield and their team for organising such a good evening, which generated a wonderful atmosphere and certainly got us in the mood for Christmas.

Otley Friendship Club Christmas

Friendship Club members enjoyed their usual Christmas three-course turkey dinner on the 8th December, cooked by Wendy Marshall with Andy and Christine helping on the day. This was followed by songs from the 1950/60s, led by Dennis Maisley. Guest of honour was Tony Soames, with his partner Marion. Tony has for many years given the Club a free mystery tour in the autumn. These trips have taken us on many backroads with views that one very rarely sees and have been greatly appreciated. The following week was the club's Christmas tea, which was again provided by Wendy and her helpers, with cakes baked by ladies of the Club. Invited guests included those who had given talks and demonstrations during the year and we were also pleased to welcome the Revd Clare Sanders and the Revd Jane Hall.

Russell Ling

SWILLAND

I hope everyone has had a happy Christmas. May I wish you all a happy New Year. I was away for our carol service and carol singing but I gather both were successful, with lots of people attending. It was lovely to have full pews in church. Our Christmas Draw was a success, selling most of the tickets. We had over 40 prizes all of which had been donated. The lunch with stalls was a happy community occasion, although not as well attended as in previous years. Many thanks to all those who helped in any way and for all the gifts of prizes. We made a profit of over £500.

Ann Kent

Flower rota – thank you all.

8th - 15th January. Gill Reidy
22nd - 29th January. Jackie Williams
5th - 12th February Margo Barker

RAINFALL – NOVEMBER

This was the wettest month since June, with 3.50 inches of rainfall, but the final week did give us some welcome sunny days with a few light frosts. This all changed again in December when we had milder weather and early morning fogs.

Before the Clean Air Act of 1956, November was always regarded as being a foggy month. The fog in those days could be really thick and was referred to as a pea-souper, which made driving very treacherous. There were two reasons for this. First, fog usually occurred during periods of high pressure, when there was very little air movement to clear it. Second, coal fires were universally used to heat homes and the soot combined with the mist to make the air much denser, which reduced visibility. In 1952 the smog in London caused the deaths of 4000 people who were either old or who had breathing disorders. Men had to walk in front of buses with torches to show them the way. During that year, the Smithfield Agricultural Show took place and many of the show animals also succumbed to the smog. Fortunately, this is now a thing of the past.

A happy New Year to all my readers.

Russell Ling

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Otley Hall Retreat Day Programme 2017

Our programme of retreat days and workshops is now available to book, and includes some inspirational leaders and wonderfully thoughtful titles.

We begin the programme on 1st April with a day lead by Carl Melville and Emma Haggart titled 'A Taize Music Workshop'. To view the full list of leaders and dates, please visit our website where you will find all the information you need www.otleyhall.co.uk Email; events@otleyhall.co.uk or phone [01473 890264](tel:01473890264).



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HAPPY NEW YEAR

We hope you will renew your subscription to Church Times for a further year. Please pay the £8.50 annual charge to your distributor.

75 YEARS ON A DESERT ISLAND

Seventy five years ago this month, on 29th January 1942, the now familiar signature tune 'By a Sleepy Lagoon' heralded the very first edition of 'Desert Island Discs'. Devised and presented by Roy Plomley, it was broadcast on the BBC Forces Programme. In the dark days of the War it was an instant hit – well-known people were asked to choose eight records to have with them if they were cast-away on

a desert island. Helpfully, they were granted a copy of the Bible and the works of Shakespeare, as well as 'an inexhaustible supply of gramophone needles', essential accessories for the gramophone player that had somehow survived the ship-wreck. They could then choose one 'luxury' to have with them. It could not be a means of escape nor of communication with the outside world.

The first castaway was the Viennese comedian, actor and musician, Vic Oliver, and the first piece of music chosen was Chopin's Étude No.12 in C minor, played by pianist Alfred Cortot. Apart from a five-year break between 1946 and 1951, the programme has been on air ever since. Well over 3000 people have been cast away over that period.

'Desert Island Discs' is still on the air. No-one turns down a chance to be on it. 'Why would they?' its producer once said. 'A nice free lunch, your own choice of music and a chance to talk about yourself for 45 minutes'. The programme still has a loyal and large audience, and is living proof that the best ideas don't have to be complicated. They simply have to work.

SMILE LINES

IT picnic

Looking over the log-book kept by the computer support staff at my office, I noticed several entries stating the problem was PICNIC. I asked one of the technicians what PICNIC meant. He laughed as he told me it meant "Problem In Chair, Not In Computer."

New Year problems

As you start the New Year, does this sound like you?

"Sometimes I get the feeling the whole world is against me, but deep down I know that's not true - some smaller countries are neutral."

Err....

A thought for all church councils as the New Year begins: "To err is human, but to foul things up properly requires a committee."



St PAUL

St Paul's day is the 25th January and we remember him because he was one of the Church's greatest teachers. Called Saul by his parents, he was brought up a Pharisee and became a tent-maker. He was completely against the early Christians and was there when Stephen, the first Christian martyr was stoned to death. He searched out many Christians and handed them over the prison and death.

So why did he change? Like many people since, although few so dramatically, Saul changed because Jesus came into his life. You can read all about it in Acts, chapter 9. Everything changed for Saul but he had a hard time persuading people that it wasn't a trick. Even his name changed, and as Paul he travelled teaching and founding churches. To encourage these growing communities he wrote the 13 letters (or Epistles) we can still read today. These letters are the earliest parts of the New Testament to be written, some only 20 years after Jesus.

P.S.

These names have all the letters S and P missing. Can you fit in the missing letters to make the names of some people or places in the Bible?

1. Both the Pharaoh and Joseph knew - OTI - HAR.
2. THEO - HILU - was Luke's friend.
3. St John wrote his Revelation on the island of - ATMO - .
4. MO - E - led the Israelites out of Egypt.
5. E - THER was a queen and a book of the Old Testament is named for her.
6. Paul was imprisoned in the town of - HILLI - - I.
7. Paul's friend - RI - CILLA was the wife of Aquila.
8. A town in Sicily, - YRACU - E, Paul stayed here on his way to Rome.

What do you call a camel that's got three humps?
Humphrey.

Who rides a camel and carries a lamp?
Florence of Arabia.



-
- 1.Potiphar
 - 2.Theophilus
 - 3 Patmos
 - 4.Moses
 - 5.Esther
 - 6.Phillippi
 - 7.Priscilla
 - 10.Syracuse.

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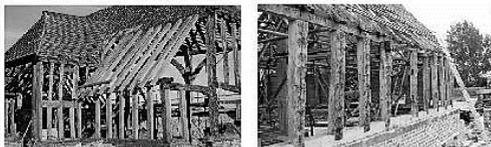
"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter..."

...so this winter sees roaring fires, dark Ales, hearty stews and juicy mussels; And, of course, Christmas. Enjoy Christmas Eve by Candlelight, and then a brisk walk to the pub for a drink at lunchtime on Christmas Day... we are even doing a Slap Up Brunch on Boxing Day. Check our website or ask at the pub for details of all our Christmas celebrations – it would be a shame to miss out.

Merry Christmas Everybody

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