



The Seeker

October



2012

The church magazine for *St Mary the Virgin, Sixpenny Handley with Gussage St Andrew and St Rumbold's, Pentridge*

Who's who?

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Trussell Trust

A huge thank you to all the people of Pentridge who opened their gardens over the only good weekend in June. It was inspiring, and then rounded off with some wonderful tea and cakes in the village hall. About £400 was raised for St Rumbold's Church.



Garden Party raises £1,770

The second Woodcutts Farm Garden Party in August was a great success. A staggering £1,770 was raised in aid of St Andrew's Chapel, thanks to Marion Tozer and the people at Dean and Gussage St Andrew.



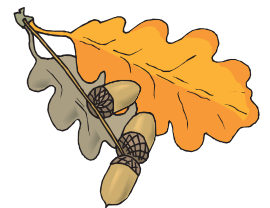
Fashion Talk - 3rd November

Come along to a talk by staff at Blandford Fashion Museum in The Barn, Woodyates, at 2.30pm on Saturday 3rd November. £5, in aid of St Rumbold's.



Autumn Fayre - 24th November

Come along to The Shed (Hanlega's) for our Autumn Fayre on Saturday 24th November from noon to 4pm, for a wonderful range of gifts, goods, games and refreshments. Shop early for Christmas and have some fun!



Join us at Lee Abbey

We are hoping to organise a weekend visit to Lee Abbey in north Devon early next Summer. Watch out for details in December. In the meantime, have a look at their website (www.leeabbey.org.uk) and see how beautiful it is and think about coming with us!



Churchyards - 'Highly Commended'

Thanks go to George Jackson and Judith Gillespie-Smith and their respective teams of volunteers at St Mary's and St Rumbold's. Both received 'Highly Commended' in this year's Living Churchyard Scheme.

This is a project run by Salisbury diocese to celebrate the unique nature of our churchyards. They are beautiful, peaceful places that have never been treated with pesticides or fertilisers and are a refuge for local flora and fauna as well as a place to meet God. If you would like to help keep our churchyards beautiful please have a word. The judges described Pentridge churchyard as 'a peaceful setting... and a beautiful space.'





**News items
and articles welcome!**

**Please drop them in to
the Vicarage, or email;
rev.mel@handleychurch.org.uk**

Thanks!

When I say...

When I say, I am a Christian,
I'm not shouting, I am saved.
I'm whispering, I get lost
That is why I chose this way.

When I say, I am a Christian,
I don't speak of this with pride.
I'm confessing that I stumble

And need someone to be my
guide.

When I say, I am a Christian,
I'm not trying to be strong.
I'm professing that I am weak

And pray for strength to carry on.

When I say, I am a Christian,
I'm not bragging of success.
I'm admitting I have failed

And cannot ever pay the debt.

When I say, I am a Christian,
I'm not claiming to be perfect.
My flaws are too visible

But God believes I'm worth it.

When I say, I am a Christian,
I still feel the sting of pain.
I have my share of heartaches

Which is why I seek His name.

When I say, I am a Christian,
I do not wish to judge.
I have no authority
I only know I'm loved.

Author unknown

Dear Friends

*'Ashes to ashes, dust to dust'
'all the deceits of the world, the flesh and the devil'
'read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest'
'till death us do part'
'peace in our time'...*



Are the quotes from Shakespeare or from the Bible (and if so, which translation)?

In fact they are neither. They come from the Book of Common Prayer, the BCP. And 2012 is not just about the London Olympics, Paralympics or the Diamond Jubilee – important as all these are. 2012 is also the 350th anniversary of the Book of Common Prayer, the BCP, The Prayer Book.

First appearing in 1549, in the reign of Edward VI, it was a product of the English Reformation and was the first book to contain Sunday and daily worship in English within a single volume. It was written by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, and was rapidly succeeded by a revision in 1552, also by Cranmer.

However, on the death the king, his half-sister Queen Mary restored Roman Catholic worship. Thomas Cranmer was tried for treason and heresy and imprisoned for over two years. Under pressure from the authorities, he made several recantations of his work. However, on the day of his death, he dramatically withdrew his recantations, thrusting the hand that had signed them into the flames of his execution. He died a heretic to some and a martyr to others. He was certainly an amazing man.

On Queen Mary's death, a compromise version was published in 1559. And then, following the Civil War, a final revision was published in 1662. This is what we still use and celebrate this year. It is used in over 50 different countries and has been translated into over 150 different languages. It has been also borrowed by Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian churches, and the marriage and burial rites have found their way into those of many other denominations and into the English language itself. Like the Bible and Shakespeare, many words and phrases from the Book of Common Prayer have entered popular culture, even we don't always realize what we

are saying.

The biggest change to what had come before was that the services were not in Latin but in English. This might seem obvious to us today, but it was not always so. English was still not spoken in some more remote areas of England, and the Prayer Book Rebellion in the 1540s consisted of Cornishmen and Devonians who rose up and marched in protest. They got as far as besieging Exeter before they were stopped by force.

It must have been a real shock to have everything in English. The intention was to make worship accessible to everyone, and the changes it made were far greater than any changes in worship we have seen since. It was the great attempt to give Jesus to the people – the recognition that Christ is not the preserve of the educated or the priestly, but is accessible to everyone. This is the great message of Thomas Cranmer, and he paved the way for all later work to make worship modern and relevant.

Of course, today we can find the language of 1662 strange. But, like Shakespeare, when presented well it can send us soaring with its depth and beauty – and when done badly it can be excruciating! People sometimes expect me not to like it. But out of the four services in our churches each Sunday, at least two (and sometimes three) services are from the Prayer Book. It is not for everyone, of course – the Informal at St Mary's is in a very different style - but it is very beautiful. And its lesson is that God is accessible.

There is room for all sorts of language, all sorts of worship, of course, as long as we remember that God wants our hearts, not any particular form of words. So whichever form of worship works for you, fly with it – Let your heart fly through it to God. And let Christ dwell in you richly. See you soon!

Your friend and vicar, Mel

Things that go bump in the night...

Halloween seems to grow each year. It is now the third biggest holiday in the United States. I expect you know that the name comes from All Hallow's Eve, the night before All Hallow's Day, also called All Saints' Day. This is the day when we celebrate all the saints – all Christians – who have died. November 1st was chosen to coincide with pagan festivals, to help bring these cultures into the Church, just like the dates for Easter and Christmas. It's this assimilation of festivals that makes Halloween so confusing.

For a start, 31st October marked the end of the Celtic year and the story goes that the Celts believed it to be the day spirits would come back and possess a body of the living to get into the afterlife. However, the people who were living were not keen on being possessed (hardly surprisingly) and would dress up in scary costumes to frighten away these spirits. So fancy dress was originally worn as a form of protection.

On a more cheerful note, I have to admit that I am completely hopeless at apple bobbing. This goes back to the Romans celebrating Pomona, their goddess of fruit. Her festival was in October and her symbol an apple. I am not going to worry about that. I cannot see getting soaked in cold water is wrong, anymore than having a Christmas tree or eating Easter eggs...

And then there is the pumpkin lantern. This comes from Irish folklore about a notorious trickster called Jack, who tricked the Devil himself into climbing a tree to pick some fruit. He then placed a cross at the bottom, stopping the Devil from climbing back down. Jack eventually removed the cross, but only after making the Devil promise never to take his soul to Hell. When Jack died, he was refused entry to Heaven for making a pact with the Devil, yet the Devil wouldn't take him into Hell either. Instead, the Devil tossed him a glowing ember from the fire, and Jack put this inside a turnip he had in his pocket to make it last longer. Over time the turnip has changed to a pumpkin, and Jack wanders the world.

This is an odd story, but the message is, I suppose, to be very careful who you make deals with!

The bit I really don't like about Halloween is 'Trick or Treat'. This involves dressing up in costumes and knocking on neighbours' doors. My parents lived for a time in America, and the shops were full of special packs of sweets. (The dentist next door used to give out toothbrushes to compensate.) In fact, Trick or Treating comes from a European custom called 'souling'. People would go from door to door to ask for soul cakes. For every cake they would say a prayer for a dead relative. But I worry that, once you get away from the fun of small children dressing up with their parents, you are left with little more than begging with threats.

However, don't blame children for all the world's problems. Every pupil at a school in Bristol has signed a good behaviour pledge in the run-up to Halloween as they are "tired of being labelled troublemakers". Orchard School, in Horfield, Bristol, came up with the idea themselves. Claire Robinson, from the school, said, "They want to do something positive to show that they're responsible. It's a student-led idea and project. A lot of students are sick and tired of Halloween being a problem in their area." The students have pledged "to behave responsibly and encourage others to do the same" and to "clear up any mess left by those less responsible".

So, am I right to be concerned about the celebration of witches and ghosts, mixed up with a lot of vulgar commercialism, and the whole idea of having a holiday related to the dead? Should we be holding a 'Light Party' instead? The challenge comes in separating things out – not being a party-pooper, but standing up for what is good and resisting what is bad. It comes down to being careful, using our God-given common sense. Be careful. If you are not sure, pray for guidance and protection. And if you are still not sure – don't do it!

After all, All Saints' Day and Halloween share the idea of talking about death. Maybe, we should reclaim the subject. We have the truth of the matter after all. There are so many people who look for God in the wrong place, in darkness and shadows. Yet the true Living God, who comes to us in Jesus, is treated with suspicion.

But the wonderful thing is that it doesn't matter where we have been. It doesn't matter if we have taken a few wrong turns along the way, got lost in the shadows. It is where we are now that matters. This is the answer to all the Halloween nonsense we surround ourselves with. There is nothing about death to be frightened of. There is nothing dark about eternity. And we are all called to be saints.

1277

On average a British child has just 1,277 days between birth and starting nursery education. Research has shown that 52% of the UK's under-5s attend a church-based toddler group. That is around 2 million children, having fun in an exciting space where there is lots of room and some good company.

But they are not the only ones who benefit. These little ones are always accompanied by an adult carer, whether this is a parent, a grandparent or other relative or friend. Perhaps they enjoy socialising with the other adults, or perhaps they need a bit of support. That might take the form of a friendly word of advice from the toddler group leaders (most of whom are volunteers and many have children of their own) or a simple word of encouragement from a fellow carer. For many engaged in the tough job of caring for small children, their toddler group is a real lifeline and the relationships that start there may last a lifetime.

The churches that open their doors in this way are truly demonstrating God's love at the heart of their communities in a vital and practical manner. They are investing in children and their families at a critical stage of their lives. And that is Good News for ALL of us, whether you like your Society Big or Small!

(Adapted from '1277 National Strategy for Christian Toddler Groups')

At St Mary's we have a toddler group, Teddy Bears, on Thursday morning from 10.30 to noon. Come along for a good time in a safe environment. There is no charge.



✦ Bible Study

As we hope you see from *The Seeker*, the Bible is THE Book! Read it and understand more in good company on a Thursday evening once a month, 7.30pm. Mike Carter (552620) for details.

Midweek Holy Communion

Join us for a gentle service in St Mary's on the second Wednesday of the month at 11.30pm, followed by coffee.

Come and meet friends

▼ Drop into St Mary's!

Saturday afternoons, during British Summer Time from 2.30pm. Drop in for a cup of tea and a chat with someone trained to listen.

* Drop into the Post Office

Coffee Shop on the first Wednesday of the month from about 11 o'clock for a coffee and chat with the vicar.

L Sunday Lunch

Join us at Hanlega's, on the campsite, on the first Sunday of the month for lunch – please book directly with The Shed (or just turn up!) Everyone is welcome.

◆ Fellowship Group –

Meeting every Tuesday for chat, laughter and biscuits, some talk around serious themes and sometimes a steak supper at the pub! Phone Paul Skinner (552785).

☕ **Men's Group** – A beer and a chat usually on the last Thursday of the month at 7.30pm. Phone David Lockyer (552492) for details.

☼ **Mothers' Union** – Tea, company and a good talk, usually on the second Thursday afternoon of the month, from 2.45pm. Phone Sheila (553133) or Mary (552041) for details.

Join us for October and November						
SUNDAY SERVICES	St Mary the Virgin Sixpenny Handley			St Rumbold's Pentridge	Gussage St Andrew	
	Informal service includes children's time					
	9.30am	☕	11.00am	6.00pm	11.15am	9.30am
Oct 7 th	HC	(10.30am)	Informal	Evensong	Harvest HC	#
Oct 14 th	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Oct 21 st	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
Oct 28 th	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Nov 4 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	HC	#
Nov 11 th	Remembrance		10.50am	Evensong	#	#
Nov 18 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
Nov 25 rd	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC

HC = Holy Communion | MP = Morning Prayer | SofP = Songs of Praise | # = No service

All Souls – Friday 2nd November at 7.30pm
You are invited to come along to St Mary's, Sixpenny Handley for this gentle service as we pray together and remember before God those we love but see no longer. There will be coffee and biscuits afterwards.

October 2012

See side panel for key to symbols

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 ◆	3 *	4	5	6 ▼
7 L	8	9 ◆	10 HC	11 ☼	12	13 ▼
14	15	16 ◆	17	18 +	19	20
21	22	23 ◆	24	25 ☕	26	27 ▼
28	29	30 ◆	31			

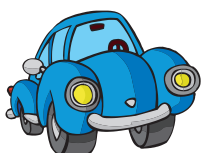
Sat 6th 11.00am Coffee Morning and Soup Lunch for the Trussell Trust
 Thurs 11th 2.45pm Mothers' Union 'Bishop John Wordsworth' by Jane Pelly
 Sat 20th 3.00pm Wedding of Jody Hodgson and Donna Martin
 Sat 27th 2.30pm Final drop in at for tea and a chat, Sixpenny Handley Church

November 2012

Updated weekly on our website

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 L	5	6 ◆	7 *	8	9	10
11	12	13 ◆	14 HC	15 ☼	16	17
18	19	20 ◆	21	22 +	23	24
25	26	27 ◆	28	29 ☕	30	

Sat 3rd 2.30pm Fashion Talk, The Barn, Woodyates
 7.30pm Pentridge PCC
 Thurs 8th 2.45pm Mothers' Union, 'Tools with a Mission' with Rod Hill
 Sat 24th 12-4pm The Shed – AUTUMN FAYRE



Need a lift to Church?

Please ring Paul Skinner on 01725 552785 and we should be able to arrange transport.



Download the Seeker from our website archive!