



*HERSTMONCEUX AND WARTLING*

# PARISH NEWS

January 2023

50p



## **This Month**

Rev Richard writes the letter from the Rectory; Rev Peter's Thoughts Page; Melinda's Famous Hymns column covers "When I Needed a Neighbour", plus the regular columns and news from around the parishes.





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## **From the Rectory**

Dear Parishioners,

Our two parish Churches, St Mary Magdalene, Wartling, and All Saints, Herstmonceux, are always open during daytime hours. At both of these ancient buildings people can fill in the visitors book, write down prayer requests and have their own time of reflection and prayer. Both churches are also on an ancient pilgrimage route and we sometimes have visitors who are walking to Canterbury or Chichester and beyond. Some pilgrims even stay the night at Wartling Church.

As well as prayer requests people sometimes write down answers to prayer received, giving thanks for our Churches and the help that they provide. One man wrote that he has returned to give thanks after his life had been turned around for the better since he visited the church and poured his heart out as a broken man.

My favourite story regarding the personal help the sacred space of a Christian church has given is that of Douglas Gresham the stepson of the famous author C S Lewes. At the age of eleven, his whole world came crashing down around him, when his mother was suddenly diagnosed with terminal cancer. Doctors believed her death was imminent. One afternoon, Douglas was walking home from a visit to the hospital when he had an incredible experience that he would never forget. He had wandered in to the courtyard of Holy Trinity Church, Headington Quarry, Oxford. "a child alone, grieving and full of fear and self pity in a hostile world." But as he slipped through the gate into the cemetery, Douglas was stunned by an overwhelming sense of God's presence.

"Every leaf, tree and flower seemed to snap into sharp focus and glow with colour, life and power, as if lit from within, and I was no longer alone. He was there. He had been all along, but now He made me to know it and know also that He was sharing my grief and understanding my fear... I went into the church and, kneeling at the altar rail, did what I had never done before. I prayed, not out loud; silently I begged that my mother be permitted to live. I prayed with every fibre of my being, mind, soul and body. After a short while, only a few seconds perhaps, I knew that my prayer had been granted...I left the church no longer alone, and comforted, secure in the knowledge that I had been heard, understood, and that my request had been granted. I was no longer afraid, no longer grieving. I knew that my mother would live." His mother Joy did indeed make a miraculous recovery – living for three more years.

After that period the cancer returned, and she was once again fighting for her life. Douglas felt that two miracles were more than he had a right to ask for or expect. He knew his mother was weary of battling the disease. And something had changed in himself. This time he prayed only, "Thy will be done." Not long afterward, cancer claimed Joy's life. Although the answered prayers didn't last forever. The Church building had been the place where significant help was given at the time of great need.

May you too find in lovely parish churches inspiration and refreshment and places where you can find help and solace in times of personal need.

God Bless, and may you all experience a very Happy New Year.  
Richard Steven

## **A Poem For January**

### THE GATE OF THE YEAR

First titled 'God Knows' by Minnie Louise Haskins 1875-1957

(This poem was handed by Princess Elizabeth to her Father when she was 13 years old)

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown".

And he replied:

"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way".

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.

And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

*So heart be still:*

*What need our little life*

*Our human life to know,*

*God hath comprehension?*

*In all the dizzy strife*

*Of things both high and low,*

*God hideth His intention.*

*God knows. His will*

*Is best. The stretch of years*

*Which wind ahead, so dim*

*To our imperfect vision,*

*Are clear to God. Our fears*

*Are premature; In Him,*

*All time hath full provision.*

*Then rest: until*

*God moves to lift the veil*

*From our impatient eyes,*

*When, as the sweeter features*

*Of Life's stern face we hail,*

*Fair beyond all surmise*

*God's thought around His creatures*

*Our mind shall fill.*

## **Special Services at Wartling in January**

On 8th January our annual Plough Sunday Service is at 10am. Asking for Gods Blessing on the Farming year ahead.

On the 20th January our Informal Cafe Style Rural Service is at 3.30pm. We have Paul Lovett Smith a local farmer speaking about sustainable farming that can feed the world.

You are all always welcome to our services.

## **December Services in Herstmonceux and Wartling Parish Churches**

**1st January**

### **2nd Sunday of Christmas**

- 8am Wartling Holy Communion (BCP)  
Hebrews 2:10-end. Matthew 2:13-end
- 10am Herstmonceux Family Service

**8th January**

### **Epiphany**

- 8am Herstmonceux Holy Communion (CW)  
Ephesians 3:1-12. Matthew 2:1-12
- 10am Wartling Holy Communion (CW)  
Isaiah 60:1-16. Ephesians 3:1-12. Matthew 2:1-12
- 3.30pm Herstmonceux Evensong  
Psalm 100 Isaiah 60:1-9. John 2:1-11

**15th January**

### **2nd Sunday of Epiphany**

- 8am Wartling Holy Communion (BCP)  
1 Corinthians 1:1-9. John 1:29-42
- 10am Herstmonceux Holy Communion (CW)  
Isaiah 49:1-7. 1 Corinthians 1:1-9. John 1:29-42
- 3.30pm Wartling Rural Service

**22nd January**

### **3rd Sunday of Epiphany**

- 8am Herstmonceux Holy Communion (BCP)  
1 Corinthians 1:10-18. Matthew 4:12-23
- 10am Wartling Morning Prayer (CW)  
Psalm 113. Amos 3:1-8. 1 John 1:1-4
- 11am Children's Activity Morning
- 3.30pm Herstmonceux Compline  
1 Peter 1:3-12

**29th January**

### **Presentation of Christ in the Temple**

- 8am Herstmonceux Holy Communion (BCP)  
Hebrews 2:14-end. Luke 2:22-40
- 10am Wartling Holy Communion (BCP)/ Healing Service  
Hebrews 2:14-end. Luke 2:22-40
- 4pm Herstmonceux Combined Service

**5th February 3rd Sunday before Lent**

- 8am Wartling Holy Communion (BCP)  
1 Corinthians 2:1-12. Matthew 5:13-68
- 11am Herstmonceux Family Service.

## **Thank You**

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Thank you to everyone who helped and attended the Wartling and Herstmonceux Christmas Fairs, we will put in more details in next month's parish News.

## **Rev Peters Thoughts**

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I was in a Retreat Group recently, and I mentioned the following. It is not my writing, I only wish it was.

"In a mother's womb were two babies. One asked the other: 'Do you believe in life after delivery?'

The other replied, 'Why, of course. There has to be something after delivery. Maybe we are here to prepare ourselves for what we will be later.'

'Nonsense' said the first. 'There is no life after delivery. What kind of life would that be?'

The second said, 'I don't know, but there will be more light than here. Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat from our mouths. Maybe we will have other senses that we can't understand now.'

The first replied, 'That is absurd. Walking is impossible. And eating with our mouths? Ridiculous! The umbilical cord supplies nutrition and everything we need. But the umbilical cord is so short. Life after delivery is to be logically excluded.'

The second insisted, 'Well I think there is something and maybe it's different than it is here. Maybe we won't need this physical cord anymore.'

The first replied, 'Nonsense. And moreover if there is life, then why has no one has ever come back from there? Delivery is the end of life, and in the after-delivery there is nothing but darkness and silence and oblivion. It takes us nowhere.'

'Well, I don't know,' said the second, 'but certainly we will meet Mother and she will take care of us.'

The first replied 'Mother? You actually believe in Mother? That's laughable. If Mother exists then where is She now?'

The second said, 'She is all around us. We are surrounded by her. We are of Her. It is in Her that we live. Without Her this world would not and could not exist.'

Said the first: 'Well I don't see Her, so it is only logical that She doesn't exist.'

To which the second replied, 'Sometimes, when you're in silence and you focus and you really listen, you can perceive Her presence, and you can hear Her loving voice, calling down from above.' Anon





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## Famous Hymns

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### When I needed a Neighbour – Sydney Carter (1915 – 2004)

London born, after school at Christ's Hospital, Horsham, and graduating in history from Oxford in 1936, Sydney Carter taught in Surrey until 1940. He was baptised and buried as an Anglican, but his spiritual home was with the Quakers: he was a committed conscientious objector in World War II, joining the Friends' Ambulance Unit and serving in Egypt, Palestine and Greece – where he was part of a pacifist group including Donald Swann. It was said to be in Greece that he first became interested in traditional/folk music.

Subsequently, he increasingly wrote scripts for radio and the stage. In 1952, he started writing lyrics for Donald Swann, who needed revue material, and later, words for a musical. "I found out that I could do that," he said, "and get paid for it." In 1962, he produced an album, *Putting out the Dustbin*, with Sheila Hancock. He continued to work with Donald Swann, writing six songs for the 1964 Donald Swann EP, *Songs of Faith and Doubt*.

Carter particularly appreciated the way the words of folk songs reflected people's lives realistically. They often included political and subversive content, inspiring writing related to protest movements and social issues. In this idiom he began to write new Christian 'folk songs', from a personal position balanced between faith and doubt, frequently drawing on biblical scenarios. These include *The Lord of the Dance* (with a tune based on the Shaker Allegro, often known as Simple Gifts) and *One More Step Along the World I Go*.

Carter satirised every form of self-righteous faith: to be without doubt was, to him, the ultimate in godless pride. He wrote two books in the late 1970s, and in one of them said "Bibles, legends, history are signposts: they are pointing to the future, not the past. Do not embrace the past or it will turn into an idol." Jesus was central to Carter's experience. Not, in his words, "the official Jesus - but the Jesus who is calling you to liberty, to the breaking of all idols including the idol which he himself has become."

The bringing of unity and peace in the world was central to Carter's faith. He wrote the social justice song *When I Needed A Neighbour* for the launch of Christian Aid Week in 1965. It's a little unusual for him - lyrically simple with a straightforward message, as you might expect from a campaign song. His songs mostly were more deliberately oblique, as he envisaged the true meaning of the song not in the singer's voice, but in the response in the listener's mind.

Although the song was not intended as a hymn, it's been used widely by churches, and by schools using it in assemblies because it incorporates their ethos without being explicitly Christian. Carter himself wrote the tune, sometimes called Neighbour. Perhaps we can all bear in mind the action it calls for from us, at the start of this new year.

Melinda Stone



## **Weather in November and Early December 2022 – Winter Arrives Early**

The rain of early November continued well into the second half of the month and it was only in the last day or so that the threat of further wet weather receded for the time being. If you wanted good weather it paid to choose the last two Fridays in the month. Both were sunny with light winds and the vestiges of autumn warmth. Otherwise, there were spells of wet and stormy weather. November proved to be the windiest month since February and the wettest of the year by a very long chalk. Here in Cowbeech, I recorded marginally over eleven inches of rain which is about a third of a normal year's rain. In the last three months we have received almost 75% of our rain for this year. Such has been the transformation in the rainfall situation that we can now expect to receive our normal rainfall for the year.

Why should this have been? It has been warm with most of our winds blowing from the south or south-west and with barometric pressure lower than normal the conditions have been just right for beefy shower clouds to develop over the English Channel and soak the coastal counties. Indeed, the barometer fell to its lowest since December 2020 with a pressure of 974 millibars recorded at 01:00 on the 17th (28.76 inches in old money).

The average maximum temperature for the month was almost 13°C about 1.5°C above the thirty-year average. The highest maximum was a little over 17°C on the 13th and the lowest just under 8°C on the 29th. On the 8th the highest minimum was slightly over 13°C and the lowest a touch under 3°C on the 22nd so no air frost in the month.

As the month drew to a close, major changes were afoot in the atmosphere as the low pressure systems which had produced so much rain were squeezed out by a large and strong area of high pressure over Russia. The wind turned into the north-east and the warmer temperatures became an increasingly distant memory. It was not until the end of the first week in December that really cold temperatures arrived as the high pressure over Russia weakened and allowed a deep depression to move south over Scandinavia with a resultant rise in pressure over Greenland. A truly icy blast of air originating from the Arctic came our way with bitterly cold nights and daytime temperatures not far above freezing; a taste of winter weather as it used to be. On the 11th we experienced our first significant snowfall since the so-called beast from the east in March 2018 resulting in the inevitable transport disruption and interference with normal daily life. As I write this column on the 15th the cold will stay with us for two or three days more before relief arrives.

Sixty years ago, the weather was about to deliver one of the worst winters of the 20th century. By 17th December high pressure was showing its hand to the north of Scandinavia and during the next few days sank south drawing biting easterly winds in from Siberia. Christmas Day was dry in this part of the world but bitterly cold. Worse was to come for, as the high pressure to the east relented, it allowed a cold front to move down the country from the north followed by Arctic winds with high pressure over Greenland, a situation not dissimilar to the one in early December this year. The cold front stalled over Southern England as a depression formed on it remaining largely stationary for three days. The snow piled up but even worse was to follow as a new depression to the south-west introduced blizzard conditions on the night of 30th/31st December. Deep drifts formed cutting off many rural communities in this area and great hardship was experienced by inhabitants and livestock alike. The start of 1963 was not looking good

and so it proved.

A cold northerly airstream arrived with us on the 8th giving widespread snowfall which was particularly heavy close to the coast. There were a few inches inland but nearer a foot right on the coast and the adjacent South Downs. The likely explanation was the interaction between this very cold air and the slightly warmer waters of the English Channel. Suspension of afternoon lessons for the writer were a welcome consequence of this unusual local effect.

Meanwhile, in the Western Mediterranean, luxury yachts are sheltering in places like Gibraltar waiting to cross the Atlantic for Christmas and New Year in the Caribbean as the jet stream has steered depressions way to the south of their normal track and shut off the customary north-east trade winds. For many the festive season will be spent in the Atlantic this year assuming the elements relent.

Tim Roberts

## **Ray and Sheldon club for the young at heart over 60's**

Are you newly retired? or new to Herstmonceux and surrounding villages?

Looking for new things to do and want to make new friends?

The Ray and Sheldon club is for everyone over 60, we meet twice a month on a Friday afternoon in Herstmonceux village hall from 2pm to 4pm. It's only £4 each visit and it includes a cup of tea/coffee, biscuit and a good chat after the activity for the week. We have a varied and interesting programme planned for 2023 which include trug making, quiz, an outing, Parkinson choir and talks from the fire brigade and Raystede to name but a few.

Why not come to a meeting and see for yourself what a friendly group we are!  
January 13th we have a quiz and the 27th a talk from help4hedgehogs.

Contact Liz 833733 or Carol 831985 to find out more.

## **Herstmonceux Bowls Club**

On Friday 2nd December, after an enjoyable season successful members of Herstmonceux Bowls Club were presented with Cups and Trophies at the Club's Annual Dinner at The Kings Head, Horsebridge. David Payne won Men's Singles, Penny Nunan took Ladies' Singles and together they became Mixed Pairs champions. Russell Calderwood and Colin Southouse (Club Chairman) won Men's Pairs with Barbara Hooker and Penny Nunan carrying off the trophy for Ladies' Pairs. The Bomar Cup for players who have never before won a Club trophy was won by Steve Taylor. Further successes were 2 Wood Pairs, Russell Calderwood and Michael Watson; Challenge Cup Russell Calderwood and The American Cup going to Team C represented by Bryan Naish.

The outdoor bowls season is now closed until the Spring but if anyone is interested in joining a thriving village club please contact Simon Wicks, Club Captain 07800906160

Former MI5 Director General Baroness Manning Buller has said that homegrown, UK food production is 'integral' to the country's national security. She said this was particularly true during the current time of international crisis, with conflicts such as the war in Ukraine putting pressure on energy security and global food supply. The Baroness called on the government to be "consistent in planning for our food supply as it is a part of the UK's national infrastructure", saying "I believe that food is part of our critical national security, including the essential workers that grow it and harvest it, the farmers that produce our crops, meat, vegetables, fruit and even wine."

But it's not just farmers that can contribute, it is allotment and garden farmers as well. A project by the University of Sussex found that urban growers in Brighton and Hove were able to harvest 1kg of insect-pollinated fruit and vegetables per one Square metre, which is within the range of conventional farming.

The yields the urban farmers were able to harvest averaged 70kg over a season and were achieved with limited pesticide use, indicating benefits to biodiversity through habitat creation and low environmental damage compared to conventional farming practices. The researchers calculated that an average of £380 worth of produce per grower was thanks to insect pollination. Over the two-year period, the volunteers recorded over 2000 pollinating insects visiting their crops. Bees were the most common group of pollinating visitors accounting for 43% of all flower visits. Flies were also important pollinating visitors, accounting for 34% of insect visits.

Project Director Beth Nicholls said: "In a world of increasing urbanisation in both the developing and developed worlds, producing food in and around cities has the potential to improve both nutritional and health outcomes, alleviate poverty and simultaneously provide habitat for wildlife and create sustainable cities." Urban farming will help with food security. It is not necessarily scalable, due to being so labour-intensive. However, it is sustainable, productive and less damaging than traditional agriculture, some researchers estimate urban produce could provide up to 20% of the world's food.

Beth further highlighted the potential of UK urban farming: "The UK imports approximately £8 billion of fruit and vegetables each year, but our results show that green spaces in cities, such as allotments and community gardens, could play an important role in meeting that demand."

Rev Peter



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## Herstmonceux Allotments

Did you know that the Parish Council have an allotment site tucked away in Stunts Green?

It's a great way of growing your own in these distressed times and you don't have to be a gardening expert to benefit.

There are a lot of experienced tenants on site to advise and guide you.

If you may be interested you should register your interest with the Parish Council (restricted to Herstmonceux parishioners) but ..

You could pop along and talk to one of the Herstmonceux Allotment Association committee members, who could show you around. Just contact the chair, Malcolm Bradshaw, on [info@mjbradshaw.com](mailto:info@mjbradshaw.com) to organise something.

Give it a go.

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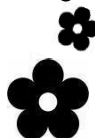
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## **Herstmonceux Free Church News**

Please remember there will not be a Community Breakfast in January. We will be back in February – see below.

### **Services at Herstmonceux Free Church this month**

On these Sundays, there will be a service at 10.45 at the Free Church in Chapel Row: 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> January. Everyone is welcome to come along and a zoom link will be available for anyone who prefers.

### **Sunday 5th February at Herstmonceux Village Hall**

Our next community breakfast at the Village Hall will have a theme of 'Love is in the Air'. Join us any time between 10.00 to 12.00 midday for tea, coffee, breakfast and optional crafts and quiz.

### **Warm Hubs**

We are pleased to be able to offer a warm hub space every Tuesday afternoon 1.00pm – 4.00pm at the Free Church. Come and join us for tea, coffee or cup-a-soup and a chat along with board games, jigsaw puzzles and adult colouring as added entertainment.

This is in addition to our community breakfasts on the first Sunday of each month (except January).

For the zoom link or further information please contact Sylvia 07909 644762

**RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)  
HERSTMONCEUX LOCAL MEETING**

We meet at 10.45 on the first and third Sunday of every month. Join us for a quiet hour of worship and reflection at the Friends' Meeting House, West End, Herstmonceux BN27 4NR or call 01323 844269 for more details.  
[www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk)

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*Sunday Masses*

Sunday 10:30am at St. Wilfrid's Hailsham

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*Holy Days*

10:00am at St. George's, Polegate; 7:00pm at St. Wilfrid's, Hailsham

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<b>ASSISTANT PRIEST</b>	Rev. Peter Doodes	Tel: 01424 892329
<b>LAY READER</b>	Mr. John King, Camelot, Boreham Street	Tel: 832997

**CHURCHWARDENS**

<b>Herstmonceux</b>	Mrs. Pam Kendall	Tel: 833079
<b>Wartling</b>	Mr. David Harding	Tel: 832150
	Mr. Paul Hurle	Tel: 832980

**PCC SECRETARIES**

<b>Herstmonceux</b>	Mrs. Melinda Stone	Tel: 833976
<b>Wartling</b>	Mrs. Penny Vasey	Tel: 833603

**PCC TREASURER for both Herstmonceux and Wartling**

Mr. Andrew Phillips	Tel: 832619
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**ORGANISTS**

<b>Herstmonceux</b>	Mrs. Anne Kenward	Tel: 441244
<b>Wartling</b>	Mr. David Oakenfold	Tel: 724676

**VERGERS**

<b>Herstmonceux</b>	Mrs. Pam Kendall	Tel: 833079
<b>Wartling</b>	Mr. Paul Hurle	Tel: 832980

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