

Bollington Church News

The magazine of Bollington Parish Church, St Oswald's



June 2023

Price 50p



Who's who at St Oswald's

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Deanery Synod: Anthea Wilkinson, Anne Coomes

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Letter from Nancy

Dear All,

I love hearing stories of people's holidays. Very often it is when we are away from the routine of day-to-day life, taken outside of our normal comfort zone, that we experience something new about the world. It can be when we have time to look around and reflect, that we learn a little more about ourselves. On holiday we can sometimes have moments of feeling exceptionally close to God.



Hopefully, those moments are more from being somewhere utterly beautiful and spiritual, than having a journey that is utterly terrifying and fearful. Both extremes can lead us closer to God. Is it easier for people to step inside a church as a tourist than it is to step inside the church at home? Maybe this is because as a tourist you don't stay, so there's no commitment, but at home the deep call of God reaches out to you from church to come and see, it's a life-changing call. As Augustine said, "Our souls are restless until they find their rest in you".

A pilgrimage has the best of both. It has the experience and otherness of a holiday, and is a journey with God to deepen our understanding and commitment through stepping into the faith story of a particular person or place. A visit to a place with a story of faith can become a pilgrimage, you can immerse yourself in the faith story and pray that God would speak to you through it.

Not only through visiting, but also stepping into the faith story of any of the saints, reading about them with prayer, and openness to God, can become for you, a pilgrimage journey even at home.

My holiday this summer is both family holiday and pilgrimage. We're going to

Bamburgh on the Northumbrian coast, the home of St Oswald, whose story of faith led to the founding of many churches across the land, including our own in Bollington. Wonderfully, Bamburgh topped a recent list of best seaside resorts, so it's a great place to go, for both holidays and holydays.

God of our stories, bless our goings out and our comings in. Be in step alongside us on all our journeys. Amen.

With love and blessings,

Nancy

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Pentecost – the birthday of the Christian church

On that long ago first morning of Pentecost, Jerusalem was crowded with thousands of visitors, for it was the Feast of First Fruits, looking forward to the wheat harvest.

In one small room of that great city, a small group of people who had followed Jesus were praying. Jesus had died, He had risen, and He had ascended, promising to send them 'a Comforter'.

They were not disappointed, for that morning the Holy Spirit fell upon that small room, and transformed those believers into the Church, Christ's body here on earth.

That is how the book of Acts begins. Within 30 years the Gospel had spread throughout the northern Mediterranean: Syria, Turkey, Greece, Malta... to the very heart of the Roman Empire: Rome.



The Church was on the move – God was on the move! He was calling people from every nation to repent, turn to Jesus for forgiveness of their sins, and to follow Him.



In the season of Pentecost

Brian Reader comments on the front cover

The picture on the cover is a powerful illustration of Pentecost, and you may well wonder why it has been chosen for our cover in June!

Well, in May we were happy to celebrate the Coronation, (and what a wonderful time that turned out to be).

Pentecost, which means 50 days after Easter, can fall on any date between 10th May and 13th June and this year it falls on 28th May, while in the Eastern Church it will be celebrated on 4th June. When I was growing up, we used to refer to it as Whitsun (White Sunday) and Monday was always a Bank Holiday, just as it is this year.

Nancy spoke about the meaning of Pentecost in last month's newsletter, so I will add some things now about Pentecost that you may not know.

For example, an Italian Pentecost tradition is to scatter rose leaves from the ceiling of the churches to recall the miracle of the fiery tongues, and so in some places in Italy, Pentecost is sometimes called Pascha Rosatum (Easter roses). In France, it is a tradition to blow trumpets during the Mass, to recall the sound of the driving wind of the Holy Spirit.



Tradition has it that the Disciples were all meeting in the room where they celebrated the Last Supper with Jesus, when the Holy Spirit came upon them.

But whatever the stories and traditions, one thing we can be sure of is that the coming of the Holy Spirit was a fact and that the Spirit still continues to work in individuals and Christian communities today.

My only other hope for this month is that the weather this June will be warm and sunny, which will reflect the 'Flaming June' summers of my youth!



Notes from 'The Counting House'

Finance report from our Treasurer Richard Raymond

As the summer months approach, we naturally think of hot sunny days with holidays and lots of carefree fun. Maybe this year, we will be more mindful of the financial and political difficulties in the world that might moderate our summer joys.

Our church remains as a beacon of stability and hope for everyone in the town and is much loved for being just that. We are supported by our regular congregation on Sundays and Thursdays, and at many other times the church is filled with people attending 'life events' such as weddings and funerals, and also concerts and meetings. We are grateful to all those people who feel able to contribute to the cost of the church providing this service to our town. Thank you. Please talk to me if you want further information about how to support us.

**

Russia is persecuting churches in Ukraine

A new report claims that Russia is 'weaponizing religion' in its conflict with Ukraine. The report, by the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), states that Russian authorities have closed or taken over 76 places of worship, and have killed or seized 29 religious leaders in occupied Ukraine. Russia's primary target is the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), which continues to assert its independence from the Moscow Patriarchate.

The report warns: "Russia will continue to weaponize the Ukrainian Orthodox Church." It also warns that Russia may try to eradicate religious organisations that remain independent of Kremlin control. Release International urges Christians in the UK: "Please pray for the Christians of Ukraine, that they may weather the storm."

Ring for the King!

Richard Raymond reflects on church bellringing during the Coronation weekend.

For hundreds of years church bells have rung out, not only to call communities to worship but also to celebrate special occasions.

Last year, following the announcement of King Charles' Coronation, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers initiated an appeal for bellringers to *Ring for the King*.

Now, St Oswald's does not have a peal of tower bells so could not answer this call. However, there are bellringers in Bollington (some in our congregation) and they did respond to *Ring for the King*. Also, the old bells of St John's were transferred to St Thomas Stockton Heath, so did they *Ring for the King*?



Over 4000 towers up and down the country rang their bells over the Coronation weekend. Many had recruited new ringers to join in the celebrations and some lapsed ringers returned to belfries. Indeed, 25 miles away the bells of St Thomas Stockton Heath did ring and they were led by the wife of Revd Michael Ridley sometime curate at St John's in Bollington.

In Prestbury 14 ringers turned out to ring on Coronation Day and half of them were Bollington residents. Two of the commonly called sequences in bellringing are Queen's with the bell order 13572468 and the other being King's which is 75312468. So, it was appropriate to ring from Queen's to

King's separated by the unusual celebratory 'firing'. This is when all eight bells are rung simultaneously to produce a magnificent clashing sound.

On the Monday, six ringers, four of whom had connections to Bollington, rang a peal of 5040 changes of the method Plain Bob Minor on the bells of St John the Evangelist Chelford. This took over two and a half hours. During that time, each ringer had to pull their bell rope making their bell strike accurately in an

ever-changing sequence and doing so every 2 seconds. It is quite a feat of concentration as they had to know their place in the sequences by memory with no music sheet in front of them!



The town and church members certainly played their part in the *Ring for the King* celebrations during the Coronation weekend despite there being no ringing bells now in Bollington.

**

Church bulletin notices that didn't quite work...

~ The students will present Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' in the church on Friday at 7pm. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

~ A new loudspeaker system has been installed in the church. It was given by one of our members in memory of his wife.

~ The outreach committee has enlisted 25 visitors to make calls on people who are not afflicted with any church.

~ The Pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday morning.

Spiritual Disciplines: Simplicity

‘Clutter is not just the stuff on your floor. It’s anything that stands between you and the life you want to be living.’ (Peter Walsh).

The spiritual discipline of **simplicity** is about living more simply and ensuring that possessions don’t end up possessing us! Jesus expresses the heart of simplicity in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:19-34). He emphasises trusting God, not worrying about material things but *‘seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness,’* (Matthew 6:33).

‘The Christian Discipline of simplicity is an inward reality that results in an outward lifestyle. Both the inward and the outward aspects of simplicity are essential.’ (Richard Foster).

What happens in our hearts impacts the way we live our lives. But what does this look like in practice? Richard Foster lists a number of outward expressions of simplicity in his book **Celebration of Discipline**. These include:

- Buy things for their usefulness rather their status value – such as cars.
- Reject anything that is addictive to us – such as drinks, or social media.
- Develop the habit of giving things away to others who need them.
- Don’t get caught up with buying the latest electronic gadget.
- Develop a deeper appreciation of creation.

How can we simplify our life?

Find something that needs simplifying, such as decluttering the house or limiting the time-consuming TV or social media. It’s about stopping whatever prevents us from making the kingdom of God our top priority.

Take time to reflect and write down how we will embrace simplicity in that area. For example, stop using the iphone or computer one hour before bed, and keeping it outside the bedroom.

‘Always remember the essence of Christian holiness is simplicity and purity: one design, one desire: entire devotion to God.’ (John Wesley)

Celebrating Fatherhood

‘What is a Christian? The richest answer I know is that a Christian is one who has God as Father. If you want to know how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s child and having God as his Father.’ (J I Packer, Knowing God)



The month we celebrate fathers on Father’s Day. Unlike Mothering Sunday, this doesn’t have a distinctly Christian origin. However, it does provide an opportunity the celebrate God’s fatherhood and what it means for us.

At His baptism, as Jesus came out of the water: *‘heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him.*

And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.’ (Matthew 3:16,17). What can we learn about Jesus’ relationship with His Father, the role of fathers and our relationship with God?

The Father’s presence

When Jesus was baptized, the Father made His presence real by the Holy Spirit. It’s the Spirit who enables us to call God *‘daddy’* (abba, Galatians 4:6). God is with us and knows our joys and sorrows, fears and trials. In this way, dads can relate to their children.

The Father’s love

The Father described His Son as *‘beloved’*, who like us, is subject to His unconditional love. Dads should be constant in assuring their children of their love.

The Father’s pleasure

The Father tells Jesus that He is *‘well pleased’* with Him. We also need to hear this, if we feel that we are disappointing God or letting Him down. This can arise with harsh words spoken by our parents. Fathers should use every opportunity to demonstrate their pleasure in their children, especially when things go wrong.

God - the Three in One

This month we celebrate Trinity Sunday. The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the most important of the Christian faith, for it goes to the very heart of what God is like. The Bible is quite clear: there is one God, but He is revealed in three 'persons' – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



Have you ever wondered at what point in the Bible God is revealed as being more than one person? Well, you don't have to read very far: only to Genesis 1:26, where God (Elohim – a plural noun) says: Let US make man in OUR image. (Gen. 1:26)

The Bible reveals a pattern: God the Father lives in heaven and has never been seen. God the Son became the incarnate Jesus Christ, who made known to us the Father, and God the Holy Spirit, who is unseen, has been sent to live within and to equip His people, the Church.

The Trinity is basic to our salvation – for these three persons in the one Godhead have combined to save us from our sins: it is the WILL of the Father, the saving WORK of the Son, and the indwelling WITNESS of the Holy Spirit. (John 14:16, 23-26).

Good to think about...

The fruit of the Spirit is not excitement or orthodoxy: it is character. - *G Duncan*

Have you ever noticed the difference in the Christian life between work and fruit? A machine can do work; only life can bear fruit. - *Andrew Murray*

All in the month of ... June

It was:

125 years ago, on 9th June 1898 that Britain leased Hong Kong from China for 99 years, and it became a British Crown Colony. It was transferred back to China in 1997.

75 years ago, on 21st June 1948 that the ship HMT Empire Windrush docked in London, bringing the first large group of immigrants from the West Indies to the UK.

Also 75 years ago, from 24th June 1948 to 12th May 1949 that the Berlin Blockade and Airlift took place after the Soviet Union blockaded Berlin.

70 years ago, on 2nd June 1953 that the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II at Westminster Abbey took place.

65 years ago, on 9th June 1958 that Gatwick Airport officially opened.

50 years ago, from 16th to 25th June 1973 that Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev visited Washington DC and said that the Cold War was over.

Also 50 years ago, on 28th June 1973 that elections were held for the Northern Ireland Assembly. It began operating on 1st January 1974. The seventh Assembly met in May 2022, but has not been able to meet since.

40 years ago, from 16th to 24th June, that Pope John Paul II visited his native Poland. He held a private meeting with Lech Walesa, the founder of the banned trade union Solidarity. Walesa became President of Poland in 1990.

25 years ago, on 11th June 1998 that the UN declared an official famine in Sudan. 250,000 people were saved by international aid, but up to 100,000 died in South Sudan. A ceasefire in the Second Sudanese Civil War was signed on 15th July but collapsed in April 1999.

20 years ago, on 20th June 2003 that the Wikimedia Foundation was founded in Florida. The non-profit charitable organisation operates Wikipedia.

Book of Remembrance for June

2nd June - Jeffrey Newcombe
4th June - Sue Bennett
6th June - Joe Fisher
6th June - Annie Fisher
6th June - Rachel Mary Arnold
6th June - Ian Hough
7th June - Fred Walton
7th June - Ethel Fidler
7th June - Bertha Jackson
7th June - Albert Clayton
8th June - Mary H Sutton
8th June - Jimmy Bennett
9th June - William Alexander Robb
10th June - Donald Ainsworth
10th June - James Blower
10th June - Graham Hough
11th June - Edith (Cissie) Hough
12th June - William Ian Hughes
12th June - Eva Martin
12th June - William (Billy) Ainsworth
13th June - Jason P Whitworth
13th June - Peggy Wakefield
14th June - Ethel Arnold
17th June - Edmund Heathcote
17th June - Ethel Cantrell
19th June - John T Bowyer
22nd June - Mary Ashton
22nd June - Reginald Isherwood Stearn
24th June - John Keith Arnold
26th June - Ruth Robinson
30th June - Ida Mary Robinson



Would you like to include the name of a departed loved one? An entry costs £10. Please contact Ann Stringer on 01625 574325

Does the past haunt you?

A lady had driven her car into a ditch, and there she sat. When the police arrived, they asked her what had happened. “I was looking in the rear-view mirror, instead of looking at the road ahead,” she explained.

What a thought! There is no way to go forward if your eyes are focused on what’s behind – either in driving, or in life. A lot of people ‘ditch’ themselves because they can’t take their eyes off the past, can’t focus on the future, and move ahead, with hope in God.

Give up all hope for a better yesterday. You can’t change the past. It is dangerous to obsess over it. Instead, consider that there are over 500 verses in the Bible that tell us that God is merciful and longing to forgive us and restore us if we only turn to Him. As Isaiah wrote: ‘Do not remember the former things, neither consider the things of old. For behold, I am doing a new thing...’ (Is 43:18,19). So why let the past ruin your future? Let God begin to do that ‘new’ thing in your life.

**

Over 15 million Ukrainians need assistance

Christian Aid is warning that since the Russian forces invaded Ukraine, “An estimated 15.7 million Ukrainians need humanitarian assistance. This includes 7.1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in private homes with host communities and in collective centres.”

Christian Aid is working with partners to provide hope and to ensure people survive and rebuild. Its partner organisations provide shelter, food, medical equipment, baby incubators, lifesaving drugs, blankets, and trauma kits. They also offer a shelter for refugees.

Christian Aid says: “Every prayer, every gift, brings hope to the people of Ukraine. By joining us, you can give hope to our brothers and sisters in Ukraine.” If you can help, go to: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk>.

70 years since the last Coronation

Seventy years ago, on 2nd June 1953, the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II took place at Westminster Abbey. It was the first event where the British TV audience (20 million) was greater than the radio audience (12 million).

It helped to make television a mainstream medium, though it did not deter the many thousands – 50,000 in Trafalgar Square alone – who turned out on the streets to watch it, despite chilly weather, with wind and rain. The afternoon temperature reached a peak of only 12C – considerably cooler than the Queen's November wedding day six years earlier.



Official coronation portrait taken by Cecil Beaton

Those who watched at home were restricted mostly to 14-inch screens, and of course black and white pictures – although the event was filmed in colour for posterity. Others watched it in bars and cinemas. The reaction was universally positive.

As well as bringing the nation together, the Coronation gave the BBC a huge head-start as the channel of choice, because it was still three years before ITV was launched as an alternative viewing option.

The televising of the Coronation was a suggestion of Prince Philip, at first resisted by politicians, church dignitaries and other traditionalists. The Queen gave permission for cameras to be installed in Westminster Abbey, and the main commentary was by Richard Dimbleby, who became a fixture for events of national significance.

It was a hit abroad too. Some 85 million people in the USA watched recordings of the highlights. In Europe new relay links enabled it to be a landmark – the first live broadcast of something happening in the UK.

75 years since the arrival of Windrush

It was 75 years ago, on 21st June 1948, that the passenger ship *HMT Empire Windrush* docked in London, bringing the first large group of immigrants from the West Indies to the UK.

It was a result of the British Government's invitation to people from Commonwealth countries to settle in Britain and help rebuild the country after the devastation of the Second World War. The promise was one of prosperity and full employment, and the *Windrush* – ironically built and launched in Germany in 1930 – carried more than 1000 people, though the figure is often given as 492. In fact, there were probably 492 men from Jamaica, but also men and women from other islands, plus Polish men and women.

Most of the Caribbeans remained to settle permanently, despite mixed reactions. The first of what became known as the Windrush generation were housed temporarily in the Brixton area, where Windrush Square – an open space in front of the Brixton Tate Library – marks their arrival.

The Windrush generation generally defines everyone who emigrated to Britain from the Caribbean between 1948 and 1971, at which point all Commonwealth citizens living in the UK were given the right to remain.

In 2018 a scandal emerged involving ineptitude by the Home Office which had resulted in people from this generation being wrongly detained, denied legal rights and threatened with deportation. It was calculated that more than 80 had been wrongly deported.

These people had been living and working in the UK for decades but had never been provided with the official paperwork, and the Home Office had kept no record of those granted leave to remain.

The UK Government apologised, and the Home Secretary at the time, Amber Rudd, described her department's performance as "appalling".

The leasing of Hong Kong

Just 125 years ago, on 9th June 1898, Britain leased Hong Kong from China for 99 years, and it became a British Crown Colony. It was transferred back to China in 1997.

The Chinese Government had already agreed to make Hong Kong a Crown colony in 1842, following British victory in the First Opium War. Although the 1898 lease specifically referred to the New Territories, a productive inland area north of Hong Kong Island, it was agreed that the island and the Kowloon Peninsula would also be returned to China in 1997, and at midnight on July 1 of that year it was handed over in a ceremony attended by international dignitaries including Prime Minister Tony Blair and Prince Charles.

The new Hong Kong chief executive agreed on behalf of China to maintain a two-system capitalist government with some independence from China, although China had sovereignty. Since then, there have been civil disobedience protests about increasing Chinese influence, notably in 2014, 2019 and 2020. So far there have been no overt curbs on religious freedom, except where religious activities have been interpreted as political. Hong Kong's population is now in decline – a process precipitated by harsh restrictions.

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Worshipping online looks set to carry on

We still enjoy 'going to church' online. In fact, recent viewing figures for the CofE's national online services reveal that they continue to receive about 150,000 views a week. In 2022, they attracted more than 8 million views.

In March this year the C of E marked three years since the start of the online services, which were begun during the Covid lockdown. By the end of 2020, it was found that clips and content from the services across the country had been seen 40 million times on social-media channels.

The current figure of 150,000 a week is thought to be conservative. The C of E online service on New Year's Day gained 800,000 views alone.

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Deadline: Material for the July/August issue to reach Anne by 20th June.

Worship at St Oswald's in June

Sunday 4th June
TRINITY SUNDAY

9.15am Parish Communion
10.30am All Age Worship

Sunday 11th JUNE

10.30am Parish Communion

Sunday 18th June

10.30am All Age Communion

Sunday 25th June

10.30am Parish Communion

Regular midweek activities

Every Tuesday during term time, 9.30-11.30am, Praise & Play

Every Thursday at 10.30am, Holy Communion

**

Tea in the Garden – ALL WELCOME!

Sunday 4th June 2.30 to 4.30pm

Location: 1 Hill View (off Southwest Avenue) Bollington SK10 5DU



Entrance
fee: £5
(includes
tea and
scones)

In aid of St
Oswald's
Church
Bollington