

Diary dates for December 2009

3 rd December	10.30 Bible Study – Fruit of the Spirit
14 th December	14.00 Ecumenical Bible Study in French
16 th December	11.00 Julian Meeting George Dobinson
19 th December	17.00 Carol Service
24 th December	17.00 Crib Service
25 th December	11.00 Holy Communion

Prayer of the month

Almighty God,
you have given us your only-begotten Son
to take our nature upon him
and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin:
grant that we, who have been born again
and made your children by adoption and grace,
may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit
one God, now and forever.

Collect for Christmas Day

Prayer focus

Refugees; the homeless; those far from home in distance or in mind.



Newsletter - December 2009 St Bartholomew's Church, Dinard



Services

Sunday 11.00 Holy Communion (with hymns)
Thursday 10.00 Holy Communion (said)

A warm welcome to all who worship with us.
During the service there is a Sunday School.
After the service coffee is served.

Priest-in-charge: The Revd Gareth Randall

For further information concerning baptisms,
marriages or funerals:

 02 99 46 77 00

e-mail : gareth.randall@nordnet.fr

Website : www.stbarts-dinard.org.uk



Diary dates for 2010

18 th January	20.30 Service for Christian Unity
20 th January	11.00 Julian Meeting – George Dobinson
28 th January	10.30 Council Meeting
17 th February	10.00 Ash Wednesday
25 th February	11.00 Start of Lenten Study Group
27 th March	10.30 Council Meeting
1 st April	10.30 Maundy Thursday
2 nd April	11.00 Good Friday
4 th April	11.00 Easter Day
11 th April	12.00 AGM
18 th April	11.00 Confirmation Service
13 th May	10.00 Ascension Day
	10.30 Council Meeting
23 rd May	11.00 Pentecost
27 th June	11.00 Peterstide & the celebration of the ordination to the priesthood of The Revd Mark Vidal Hall 45 years ago
	10.30 Council Meeting
15 th July	12.00 Friends AGM
18 th July	14.00 Garden Party
7 th August	11.00 Patronal Festival
29 th August	10.30 Council Meeting
2 nd September	11.00 Harvest Festival & the celebration of the ordination to the priesthood of The Revd Donald Pankhurst 45 years ago
26 th September	10.30 Council Meeting
25 th November	17.00 Carol Service
18 th December	17.00 Crib Service
24 th December	11.00 Christmas Day
25 th December	

British Legion

436€ was collected in the region **220€** of which came from folk at St Bs. **£564** was donated to Hedley Court from the Remembrance Day collection and the surplus of money from the Sponsored Brass Clean.

Notes from the November Council

Our Church Council meets every other month to look after the management of St Bartholomew's. There is a service of Holy Communion beforehand; the meeting opens and closes with prayer; some of the items under discussion are spiritual; but fact is much of what we consider is financial, practical and organisational.

Organisationally, David Morgan was elected as Deputy Church Treasurer which will allow him to sign cheques. Paddy Vidal Hall was co-opted as our second Archdeaconry Rep and joins Geoff Carter who elected earlier in the year.

Practically, work on the side chapel floor, a tap on the outside of the library, the repainting of the font and the renovation of lych gate in the cemetery at Dinard have been completed. Other areas such as tree-trimming and protection of the stained-glass windows were mooted.

Financially, we are still working hard to receive the Monahan legacy from 2007. With the income generated here in France coupled with the money held in England we are in a reasonably healthy position but effective stewardship of our capital remains a priority. That said money raised for Hedley Court and by the Poppy collection show we are both outward and inward looking.

I am pleased to report the addition of an A4 leaflet in German on the history of St Bartholomew's to join our existing English and French versions and that a new service booklet is being produced for our Carol Service at 17.00 on 19th December.

Father Gareth



Christmas in France

I've spent Christmas in France for the past 55 years – first at my parents-in-law and now in the homes of our three daughters-in-law.

Back in the 50s, Christmas was very austere – no tree, no cards, no decorations, no Carol-singing and of course no Christmas pudding, cake or mince pies. The one Christmas tradition that French families keep is the 'Crèche'. Most people have a 'santons de Provence' brought out every Christmas and put on a side board. The traditional 'santons' were rough, naively painted, pottery about 3 inches in size. The baby Jesus would be placed in the manger after Midnight Mass, the three wise men arrived on Twelfth Night and it remained in place throughout January. The most elaborate 'crèche' may be found in Catholic Churches after Christmas some with automated figures coming down the hillside towards the stable. France is officially a secular state so State Schools lack nativity plays, Carol Services and, of course, Christmas parties. In the state lycée where I taught for 15 years, there was no outward sign of any Christmas celebrations though I used to teach my pupils 'Silent Night' in English which we sang in harmony! Christmas centred on Midnight Mass which **was** at midnight which meant Réveillon supper was at 2.00am. Would you fancy oysters and foie gras at that hour especially with young children who were going to wake up at 6.00am for their Christmas stockings? One year, my mother-in-law served up the Christmas pudding I'd brought as a desert **cold** – she thought it the same as Christmas cake. As our children grew older and came to Midnight Mass with us (Pre Vatican II so still in Latin), we had hot cocoa and biscuits after church and the oysters on Christmas Day. French children always place **one** shoe in the fireplace in which Father Christmas can leave their presents. They may be opened after Midnight Mass or on Christmas Day after lunch – none of the excitement of stockings at the foot of the beds. Most amazing of all was everybody returning to work on Boxing Day.

French Proverb of the Month

This month's proverb from 'Almanach du Marin Breton 2008' may rightly encourage trust:

Il est moins honteux d'être trompé par ses amis que de s'en méfier.

Last month's might be paraphrased as follows:

It's better to put up with someone's absence rather than their presence

Quotation of the Month

John Marshall told me that in England there was now the possibility of asking for Christmas stamps whose design was overtly Christian. One lady going into her local Post Office in Yorkshire was confused when the man behind the counter asked which denomination she wanted. After a moment's hesitation, she decided on fifty Methodist and fifty Catholic.

Bishop puts his foot in it

Bishop Clifford no longer came as chaplain but on holiday and to cat sit. He was taking part in the service and sitting in the choir stalls next to the vestry door. Part way through the service, he vanished from sight then re-appeared. This happened from time to time and we saw that he was bending low then sitting up after a minute or so. His wife, Joyce, who was in front of us, became rather perturbed asking if we thought Cliff was all right. We assumed that he was as he took his part in the service. Afterwards, he explained, the radiator by the vestry had obviously begun to leak and a bowl placed under to catch the drips. Clifford had put his foot in it and so had been trying to mop up the spillage with his handkerchief.

John Marshall

Poem of the month

Following my pastoral letter, perhaps you might care to read the words of familiar carol again and meditate on them.

In the bleak mid winter

In the bleak mid winter frosty winds made moan
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter long ago.

Our God, heav'n cannot hold him nor earth sustain
Heav'n and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for him whom cherubim worship night and day,
A breast full of milk, and a manger full of hay;
Enough for him whom angels fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air:
But only his mother in her maiden bliss
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give him, give my heart.

Christina Rossetti



By the time we had our own home, Midnight Mass was often at 9.00pm allowing us to 'réveillonner' at a reasonable hour. We would go to the Cathedral on Christmas morning leaving the turkey in the oven and the Christmas pudding steaming. If we were lucky, the Cathedral choir would sing a chorus from 'Messiah' at the end of the mass but still no carols. It was not till I could get Radio 4 on Long Wave that I could hear the Carol Service from King's – otherwise the only Christmas music was 'piped' in supermarkets: 'Jingle Bells' and 'Le Divin Enfant'. That's why I appreciate our Carol Service so much. Our house was out in the country so I took the dogs for a walk on Christmas Eve and sung all the Carols I could remember. As for cards, I sent 30 or 40 to my friends and relations in England receiving as many back *before* Christmas but Pierre and my mother-in-law dutifully sat down in the New Year to send visiting cards to all their relations – 'M et Mme Payan vous présentent leurs meilleurs vœux'. My daughters-in-law always send us a pretty, special card because I am English but otherwise never send cards. Only one of my sons has a special card made, a photo of his 4 children but it is sent in January.

Today, Christmas is much more 'Americanized'. Last year, our daughter-in-law provided Father Christmas caps for us to wear. The Christmas tree has pride of place and the réveillon is usually at 9.00pm on Christmas Eve. Last year, we had oysters and foie gras and a bûche de Noël. On Christmas Day, we had smoked salmon, turkey and raspberry charlotte cake. I took a Christmas pudding and made custard for those brave enough to try it. Not many do; my own children now enjoy it and everyone loves Christmas cake. Only one of our four children goes to church regularly but the older grandchildren all wanted to go to Midnight Mass (which was at 11.00pm) but the church was packed full and we could not get in. Perhaps the younger generation will carry on the tradition even if they never go to church the rest of the year. The Lord moves in mysterious ways.

Anne Payan

Spotlight on Words Notes on the Nativity

Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, wife of Zechariah and cousin of Mary was from a priestly family. This suggests Mary too may have had priestly connections. Part of the reason for Mary to visit her cousin Elizabeth may have been to give Joseph time to think about his options re her unexpected pregnancy. Since an engagement was as binding as marriage, a divorce was needed. Joseph could have had Mary stoned to death as an adulteress and he could have cast the first stone. If not, he could have sent Mary back to her family if they were willing to accept her. Or he could have given Mary shelter in what amounted to total isolation and complete social ostracism.

A Roman census was held to ensure that folk paid the correct tax and that young men were duly conscripted into the Roman army. This, however, was a Jewish census undertaken on the orders of Rome because Herod was ill at the time and it was normal to have a quick snapshot of the population. Jews were excused service in the Roman army on account of the restrictive demands of their religious observance.

That there was no room in the inn spared Mary the indignity of giving birth in a communal room with little or no privacy, where noise and drunkenness may have been rife and where people slept together on mats on the floor. (God bless the Innkeeper's Wife!) Joseph may well have been married earlier and had children by his former wife (one explanation for Jesus' brothers and sisters mentioned in the gospels). Women married early as soon as menstruation began and many had a life-expectancy between 20 and 25 years of age! A woman's life was hard; there was no antenatal care; usually a husband and their sons ate first!

Saint of the Month: Thomas à Becket of Canterbury

Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas à Becket was martyred in his cathedral on 29th December. Born in Cheapside London of well-to-do Norman parents in 1118, he died in 1170. He was imperious, ambitious and sometimes violent. His early life showed little pious devotion and he became good friends with King Henry II. He was appointed chancellor of the realm in 1155 and enjoyed a life of extravagant worldliness in his role as diplomat, statesman and military leader.

But when he was appointed by the king to the vacant see of Canterbury, his life style changed completely as he threw himself into his new office, giving alms profusely, living austere and inevitably coming into conflict with the king over the respective jurisdictions of church and state. Their relationship broke down in bitterness and Thomas fled to France in 1164. He remained in exile for six years. On his return the quarrel broke out afresh and Henry recklessly uttered the infamous words, "Who will rid me of this turbulent priest."

Four of his barons took him at his word, set off for Canterbury and murdered Thomas in a side chapel of the cathedral while he was celebrating mass. His last words, reported by an eye witness, were "Willingly I die for the name of Jesus and in defence of the church." Thomas was spontaneously acclaimed as a martyr and canonized within three years. All of Christendom was aghast at the sacrilegious crime and Henry did public penance. Canterbury became one of the most popular pilgrimage sites in Europe. Thomas, along with the Blessed Virgin Mary is one of the two patron saints of the Worshipful Company of Brewers.

Jackie Twinn, Reader, St Barnabas Church, Colchester

To tell the truth, that little encounter kept me cheerful till my week was up; that and the fact the cats were purring at me now...

"*Did they drive you mad?*" said my friend, as L and L leaped into his arms before he was through the door.

"*Mmm. But I got some therapy from a very distinguished source... Dame Flora Robson.*" Those two-timing cats were irritating me again. "*Name mean anything to you?*"

"*Of course. A regular at St. Nick's. Very reliable.*" He – and the cats – stared at me. "*I was at her funeral five years ago.*"

"*What! Well, somebody was fibbing. Is Mrs. Cavendish another reliable regular?*"

"*Was,*" said my friend, all three of them eyeing me fishily. "*Her funeral was last week. You could have gone.*"

David Norris

Grace of the month

The Revd Donald Pankhurst, for many years a visiting locum chaplain to St Barts and once priest with overall responsibility here, is well known for the quality of his graces at the dinner table. Donald has kindly agreed to supply the Newsletter with a baker's dozen of such prayers which will be published monthly till Christmas 2010. Here is the first:

It may be cold and raw outside,
But warm enough in here.
So thank the Lord for wintertide,
And thanks for this good cheer.

The Temple flock was pastured in the fields around Bethlehem. Sheep were pure white, without blemish and were looked after by shepherds of impeccable character who were well versed in Scripture and the Law.

Pauline Eyre

Advent Appeal 2009

Dar El Alwad Children's Home - Beirut, Lebanon

Dar El Alwad has been established for refugee and street children to address the twin concerns of health and education. It is a charity run by two UK missionaries in what amounts to very basic premises. Both are unpaid volunteers who set up the centre in 2001/2. It operates in the slums of Beirut helping refugees who cannot obtain help from the city authorities without the necessary nationality papers. The two ladies working there provide health care and schooling to infants and juniors in their open-air school and their home/dispensary. They are totally dependant on charitable donations.

I worked there in 2005 and I have a DVD of my stay to lend to anyone who is interested. Dar El Alwad is a charity most deserving of your generous support this Advent and I commend it to you.

Roger Berry

Postage Stamps

A big thank you to all who have faithfully contributed used postage stamps in aid of **Cancer Research** throughout the year. If you haven't yet but would like to, there is a box clearly marked on the work surface in the transept by the nativity window.

Gladys Dunell

Diana's Soup Kitchen

The soup lunch at Le Tamara on 14th November made a profit of **300€** which was shared equally between the church and the SPA. Thanks to all those who attended or assisted.

CHURCH-GOING
St Nicholas' Church, Brighton

Cats do your head in – as Confucius said. And he hadn't spent even one minute with Little (a midget, psychopathic Burmese) and Large (a monstrous tabby; ex-Borstal)...

One Christmas I was doing a week's cat-sitting for an old colleague – a priest. He was on retreat, and after a second morning of having my legs clawed and my rabbit *gonjons* sniffed at, so was I.

I sought sanctuary in my friend's church, the oldest in Brighton, with a long list of celebrity worshippers past and present, particularly from the world of entertainment. Dr. Johnson went there, and that afternoon I followed in his footsteps.

But only as far as the porch. A funeral was beginning so I hovered outside, vaguely looking for a notice about whose funeral it might be, not particularly wanting to mooch around the wintry gravestones or plunge into the dolefulness within. Life's too short.

"*Life's too short, isn't it?*" said a voice in my ear. An elderly woman, plump and friendly, had appeared.

"*You know, I was just* – "I said, nonplussed.

"*You're covered in cat hairs, dear,*" said the nice woman. "*I'm Mrs. Cavendish.*" She started to brush me down.

"*They're a real pain...*" In no time I was exterminating all cats. "*We just don't get on.*"

"*Their disobliging ways are a matter of habit...*" pronounced another woman who was with her: an older woman - plain but with a strong, quite striking voice. "*When there isn't any fish they won't eat rabbit...*"

Spot on.

Or... nonsense? Like my own cat-complaints.

But I had a funny feeling I'd heard it before. Heard *her* before.

I turned round but she too was already turning to enter the church. Though she hadn't *quite* finished.

"*And there isn't any need for me to spout it... there's no doing anything about it!*"

"*Thanks very much,*" I managed.

"*You're favoured,*" whispered her friend, confidentially. "*You got a nice few words there.*"

"*I'm sorry to moan* – "

"*You were fed up, dear... You do know who that is?*"

"*Well, oddly enough* – "

"*Dame Flora Robson. Shakespeare, etcetera.*" Then she also bustled off inside.

"*Of course!*" I'd actually seen her in some good - and some not so good - old films...

* * *