



The Seeker

handleychurch.org.uk



Apr 2018

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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FROM THE REGISTERS



The baptism took place of

Beatrice Monks

The funerals took place of

Emily Avellana Brown
Sarah Trent



Easter is a welcome break after the dark winter months. There is a collective sigh of relief that winter is over, and a delight that our gardens are sprouting colour again and the evenings are getting longer. For some it is also an opportunity to eat their weight in chocolate. The symbols of spring are chicks, daffodils, lambs and rabbits, while the Easter Bunny often takes pride of place.

Rabbits have nothing to do with the story of Easter, of course. The hare was a symbol of a pagan god of springtime named Eostre (which is where our word 'Easter' comes from) and his story was taken by German Lutherans and made into a fable about a bunny rabbit judging and rewarding children if they have been good. In other words, he became an Easter version of Santa Claus.

While the idea of being 'good enough' is distinctly unchristian - Jesus came precisely because we are *not* good enough - the linking of three hares together is sometimes a symbol of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All these images of spring point us to a vital part of the Easter story - new life. Spring is a wonderful time to reflect that God not only created the world, but made us creative, too. We are creative in His image. And God made us social, also in His image. Where there are people, there will be people eating and drinking together.

It is what we do. When friends, family, or even strangers come together, it won't be long before there is a meal being shared. Food brings people together, and as Christians know, can transform a meal table into something sacred.

None of the Gospels describes the Resurrection itself. The nearest we get is the visit of the women to the tomb early in the morning. (This not something anyone would make up at the time, given the low status of women in those days). Seeing Jesus being buried, and then the heavenly figure at the tomb but no body, and then meeting Jesus himself, changes everything. The women were the first people to see and the first to tell of the Resurrection. Women were the first apostles.

Two thousand years ago the Resurrection was a shock. Today, we may need to rekindle that sense of wonder and joy of those early Christians. We can sometimes be so caught up worrying about what actually happened - details that none of the Gospels record - that we do not spend enough time reflecting on the testimony of the women who saw it for themselves. He was dead. He is alive. Everything will be all right.

It wasn't long before Jesus ate with his disciples. And we eat together. We celebrate. In church we come together to make the simplest of meals, bread and wine, into something very special indeed - the best meal we will ever eat, together as the family of God. Please join us this Easter, you will be sure of a warm welcome.

Your friend and vicar, Mel



News items
and articles welcome!

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

Thanks!

Goodbye and Farewell

Mel and Margaret Durrant would like to thank everyone in our villages for an amazing twelve years here. We shall miss you all, and shall continue to pray for you and the church in this place. We are moving up to Sussex to be near to our youngest daughter. I have written some bits and pieces for *The Seeker* to fill the gap before the new vicar is appointed, so you haven't quite heard the last of me yet. However, our last Sunday will be in St Mary's on 29th April, which will be the only service that day. The churchwardens and our team of worship leaders and helpers will keep things going, and we leave you in very good hands.

Also available in colour

A full colour PDF of *The Seeker* is available from our website.

ST GEORGE

Mel Durrant

Saint George was a Christian, born in what is now Turkey in the late 3rd century. His father died when he was little and his mother took George back to her home in Palestine (modern Israel). When he grew up, George joined the army of the Roman Empire, rising to the rank of Tribune, which was the rank above Centurion, appointed by the Emperor himself. George was said to be Emperor Diocletian's favourite soldier. But the Emperor began a campaign against Christians. He needed people to blame for economic and political problems and he objected to the Christian habit of *forgiving* and *loving* people. He even announced that soldiers were *not allowed* to be Christians. He was worried they wouldn't want to fight.

In the year 303 George publically tore up the Emperor's order against Christians and resigned his military post. Not surprisingly, he was imprisoned but he was told that he would be released if he offered a sacrifice to the Roman gods. A crowd gathered to watch as George was led out... and publically prayed to the Christian God. As a result he was tortured and beheaded. He had refused to deny his faith in Jesus, and it is said that Diocletian's wife was so impressed that she became a Christian and was also executed.

The famous story of Saint George and the Dragon comes much later. William Caxton printed it in 1483 in a book called *The Golden Legend*. The story goes that people were warding off a fearsome dragon by feeding it people. One day the king's daughter was selected, led out and tied to a rock. Fortunately, George passed by and asked what was going on. He fought the dragon, marking it with the sign of the cross and the princess lead the defeated dragon into the town. This caused panic until George told the people, "*Ne doubt ye no thing, without more, believe ye in God, Jesu Christ, and do ye to be baptized and I shall slay the dragon*". And so the king and all the people were baptised and George duly killed the dragon. Finally

the king set up a church, and on the site sprang up "*a fountain of living water, which healeth sick people that drink thereof*". It is a good story. Perhaps it is linked to a memory of *something* that really happened!

We know Saint George's Day was set as 23rd April as early as 1222, and when King Edward III founded the Order of the Garter in 1348, the top order of knighthood, he put it under Saint George's patronage. The magnificent St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle was built as the chapel of the order. From that time on, Saint George was regarded as a special protector of England. George became, by adoption, English and soldiers wore "*a signe of Saint George*" on chest and back, the red cross on a white background.

But George is not only the patron saint of England. He is also the patron saint of Aragon, Catalonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Palestine, Portugal, Germany and Greece; and of the cities of Moscow, Istanbul, Genoa and Venice (second to Saint Mark). He's also patron saint of soldiers, archers, cavalry and chivalry; farmers and field workers, riders and saddlers; and he is said to help those suffering from leprosy and plague. In recent years he has even been adopted as patron saint of the Scouts.

In 1940, King George VI founded the George Cross for '*acts of the greatest heroism or of the most conspicuous courage in circumstances of extreme danger*'. Unusually, this can be awarded to both military and civilian personnel, and the medal features Saint George slaying the dragon.

We all have dragons to slay from time to time. Not real ones, maybe, but problems that challenge us mentally, physically and spiritually. And when we face such dragons, Saint George is a good role model to follow. He is the ultimate international, multicultural, multitalented hero, a refugee from a single-parent family. We can all admire him and we can celebrate his day with pride.



Why did he do it?

‘Money!’ sighed Judas, ‘don’t talk to me about money! He has no idea. He treats it like it has leprosy. No – he treats lepers better than he treats your average rich man.’

‘How so?’ asked the man from the Temple.

‘Well, take that rich fellow the other day. It’s obvious he wants to join us, and he asks Jesus what he has to do to get into the kingdom of heaven. Jesus tells him all the obvious stuff – obey the commandments; love your neighbour, blah, blah, blah. The guy says he’s done that (yeah, right!). But instead of picking him up on that, Jesus tells him there is just one thing more - he needs to sell everything he has and give it to the poor.’

‘And...?’ the companion asked, leaning forward.

‘Well, what do you think? The rich guy walked away.’
‘Did Jesus go after him?’

‘No, of course not,’ said Judas. ‘He just turned to the rest of us and said how hard it is for a rich man to get into the kingdom of heaven, “harder than getting a camel through the eye of a needle”’

‘Hmmm,’ said his companion, ‘I’ve always thought wealth a sign of blessing.’

‘Yes,’ said Judas, ‘but not Jesus! He acts like it is some kind of curse.’

‘Unless one uses it to help the poor, of course.’

‘Well yes... and no,’ sighed Judas. ‘There was this other time when a woman came to Jesus and started to pour this bottle of incredibly expensive perfume on his feet.’

‘Quite a luxury!’ the companion observed.

‘Exactly. And I knew I’d get nowhere if I suggested selling the perfume and keeping the money, so I suggested we sell it and give the money to the poor. Well, some of the money. But no, Jesus said “leave the woman alone and let her get on with it.”’

Judas went on, ‘Is this consistent? Is it sensible? He accepts this expensive gift but he condemns the rich man!’

The companion shook his head. ‘It makes no sense,’ he said, ‘particularly with that rich man in your group – you know, Matthew, Levi, the tax collector.’

Judas rolled his eyes. ‘Tax collectors!’ he said, ‘we seem to specialize in those. Matthew, Zacchaeus... But it is always the same. Make friends with Jesus and give your money away! And there’s nothing left for us. For the cause, I mean.’

‘And you should know, being the treasurer.’

‘Exactly. And I don’t trust him!’

‘Who?’ asked the man from the Temple, surprised, ‘Jesus?’

‘No! No! Matthew!’ replied Judas. ‘I sometimes wonder if he is still in cahoots with the Romans. Watching and listening, and then scribbling things down! I reckon he’s spying. I’m sure of it.’

‘I see why you would be concerned,’ said his new friend, ‘the Romans are a worry.’

‘They are why I joined Jesus in the first place’ Judas cried. ‘If he is the Messiah, then he will beat the Romans and we will be free again. I just wish he’d get on with it. Forget all this love and forgiveness and get on with the battle...’

‘And finding the money,’ reminded the companion.

‘And finding the money,’ repeated Judas.

There was a pause.

‘This is dangerous talk,’ the companion whispered. Then he leaned forward and whispered so quietly that his whisper sounded like a hiss. ‘But I think I may have a way to help you.’

‘Really?’ Judas whispered back.

‘Yes,’ the companion hissed. ‘My bosses in the High Priest’s Office would like a word with Jesus. Privately, if you know what I mean. If you could lead him to some quiet spot where they could meet, I am sure they would reward you handsomely.’

Another pause.

‘How handsomely?’ asked Judas.

‘I keep forgetting I am dealing with a practical man, my friend,’ smiled the companion. And then he paused. He had the look of a man bartering for some great treasure. ‘What would you

say to... oh, I don’t know... thirty pieces of silver?’

Judas’ eyes lit up. ‘I would say, you have a deal!’

The companion stood and held out his hand. Judas took it and was surprised by how smooth and slippery it felt.

‘So I can count on you?’ the companion asked.

‘Of course,’ Judas answered, ‘at the first opportunity. And the money?’

‘You can trust me for that,’ the companion smiled, ‘cross my heart...’

It was an expression Judas had not heard before. But he didn’t think about it long for, as his new friend walked away, the disciple had other things to consider. Practical matters.

‘Thirty pieces of silver,’ he said to himself.

‘With that kind of money, I can really make a difference in the world.’

Prayer Corner

We all need to take time out from our daily chores. We know that our bodies need a rest, our minds and spirits need refreshment.

St Mary’s and St Rumbold’s are open every day for prayer, but of course we can pray anywhere, any time. And we never pray alone.

An Easter Blessing

May the celebration of resurrected life bring new hope to our being, May the victory over earthly death turn our eyes to the promises of heaven, May the empty tomb help us to leave our sorrows at the foot of the cross, So that God’s hope, promises and forgiveness reign in our lives forever — Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord — Amen.

The confession from Holy Communion



+ Bible Study Group

As we hope you see from *The Seeker*, the Bible is THE Book! Read it and understand more in good company on alternate Thursdays at 7.15pm.

Details from Mike on 01725 552 720.

Come and meet friends

L Church Lunch

Join us at Hanlega's, at the campsite, on the first Sunday of the month for Sunday lunch – Everyone is welcome.

T Teddy Bears

Pre-school children and their carers are invited to St Mary's on Thursday mornings during school term from 10.30am to noon, for fun, drinks and biscuits and maybe a Bible story or two. There is no charge.

☕ Men's Group – A beer and a chat to finish off the month at 7.30pm. Details from David Lockyer (552 492).

🌸 Mothers' Union – Tea, company and a good talk, usually every second Thursday of the month, from 2.30pm. Details from Mary (552 041).

SUNDAY SERVICES	St Mary's Sixpenny Handley		St Rumbold's Pentridge	Gussage St Andrew
	9.30am	6.00pm	11.15am	9.30am
April 1 st	Easter Sunday	#	HC	#
April 8 th	Informal	Evensong	#	HC
April 15 th	HC	Annual M	MP	#
April 22 nd	Informal	HC	#	MP
April 29 th	Informal	#	#	#
May 6 th	HC	Evensong	HC	#
May 13 th	Informal	Evensong	#	HC
May 20 th	HC	Evensong	MP	#
May 27 th	Informal	HC	#	MP

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

Our Informal service is geared more towards families and includes activities for children.



Church Annual Meetings

It is the time of year to hold our Church Annual Meetings. Join us at St Rumbold's on Tuesday 10th April beginning at 6.50pm and at St Mary's on Sunday 15th April at 6pm (in place of the evening service).

If you would like to help with the running of our churches in any way, please come along!

See side panel for key to symbols

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

Sat 21st 10:30pm Lay Ministry Celebration, Salisbury Cathedral

See website for updates

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

Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Hebrews 13:1-2