

ST MARY'S GAMLINGAY, HATLEY ST GEORGE & ST MARY'S EVERTON



Weekly newsletter 11 September 2020



From Hilary:

As I write we have just learned of new restrictions on public gatherings - just as we were planning to return to church, this Sunday being the last planned full Benefice Zoom. However, I have received this from our Bishop Dagma:

"After contact with Government we hear that there is no change to guidance on places of worship. Worship is the work of God - not a social gathering - and gives the strength to love and serve"

This is most encouraging - I definitely relate to the need for encouragement and strengthening in love and service. It is so easy to get pulled down by the troubles of the present time - we are all grieving to some extent - so meeting together for those who feel they can, in person, is going to be a great encouragement. Here are pictures of flowers in our churches, THANK YOU and WELL DONE to those who are making sure these are there, especially when we have more frequent gatherings.



Gamlingay



Everton

I am very keen not to exclude those who have been making use of technology and will continue to need to do so. Please bear with us as we work on the current Covid arrangements, including getting the infrastructure in place to broadcast services live. Everton has a good enough phone signal to use phone-based WiFi but we have a more complicated problem at Gamlingay involving BT and Open Reach who are causing me to tear my hair out and waste hours of time waiting for people who are not attending appointments and not giving notice before or afterwards, and that's without more wasted time on phone calls..... AAGH!

We are currently working on ways in which we can have singing in the churches while meeting all the current requirements and guidelines. Congregations are still expected to wear face coverings and are not allowed to sing but worship leaders including clergy, musicians and singers, if suitable distanced, are permitted not to wear face coverings and to sing.

If you would like to be 'choir' and have a sing at a service, even if you have not been formally a choir member in the past, please get in touch with myself or Chris Miller, as we think this can be managed. However, all singers need to know the guidelines we are working to and adhere to them.

PLEASE if you have an unmet worship need or a positive suggestion talk to me so we can see what can be done while working within the current constraints of changing advice and the time and energy of all concerned. Also be aware that just because we can't do something it doesn't mean we wouldn't if we could! It has been put to me that the absence of a regularly planned communion service in the morning at Everton is unacceptable - this does NOT reflect a view on my side that communion in a parish church is not a priority under normal circumstances. However at the moment, with current restrictions, all the services are Benefice services and we have gone for consistency of timings in any one location as the least worst option.

Hilary

Family History Research by Jan Cooper

Like many other people during these past months, I have occupied myself with knitting, sewing, doing jigsaw puzzles, sorting out cupboards, etc. However, I've also had the time to do some more research on my family history. As some of you know, I'm a very enthusiastic amateur and I've been researching my family for over 20 years. Fortunately, many records are now online and this has helped those of us with families from other parts of the country, or even the world, and has been especially helpful during this time. I have done some research for some of you who are reading this and hopefully inspired you to continue and so here are a few suggestions to start some of you off. Please note that these are only **my** ideas – I know that some of you have done a lot of research of your own and may have other ideas – feel free to share! As I say, I'm only an enthusiastic amateur!

- 1) **Start with what you know** : Write down everything you know starting with your parents, grand- parents and great-grandparents with any dates, locations, occupations and plot out a simple family tree.
- 2) **Talk to relatives** : Talk to as many members of your family as possible, especially older relatives. Ask for anecdotes, family stories, details, copies of certificates, photos.
- 3) **Collect material** : Look through boxes, cupboards, envelopes to try to find any certificates you have. Birth certificates have the mother's maiden name on (but not always!) and the father's name and occupation (but not always!). Marriage certificates usually give the names of witnesses and the names and occupations of both fathers but sometimes the information can be misleading. I went down the wrong route completely when the name under 'father' was in fact the bride's father-in-law from her first marriage! Death certificates give the name of the informant which can also be useful.
Collect any other precious documents. I have my grandad's WW1 service book – over 100 years old. Some service records are also online and I discovered that a great-grandfather was discharged on medical grounds because of a corn on his foot!!
- 4) **Get organised** :You can build a family tree on some of the websites but I started by using 4 folders – one for each grandparent and just collecting information from there. I printed out censuses, added certificates and photos as well as writing up information as I found it. I now have a lot more than 4 folders!
- 5) **Websites** : There are various websites to which you can subscribe to do your research. My favourite ones are 'ancestry.co.uk' and 'find my past.co.uk' but there are many others. Some offer free trials but be careful as they can automatically expect you to join after the free trial is over. I like these two as I find them easy to use and often information missing on one can be found on another. Both have, among many records, censuses from 1841 to 1911, Parish records, military records, newspaper articles. Sometimes they have the actual certificates which you can download and print off thereby saving you a lot of money!

'Find my past' also has the fascinating '1939 Register'. On 29th September 1939, over 41 million forms were issued and collected in by enumerators who then gave out Identity cards. It was a legal requirement to carry these cards up until 1952 – I've still got mine as I was born in 1951!

As we are waiting for the release of the 1921 census and the 1931 census was destroyed by fire and the 1941 census was never taken, the 1939 Register is really important to bridge that gap.

These websites also have lots of hints on 'Getting started' as does the 'Who Do You Think You Are' website and magazine. There are free websites too: eg. 'freebmdsearch.org.uk' and 'familysearch.org' (Mormon website) And finally: as you can probably tell I really enjoy this hobby but be warned – you can get completely absorbed and it can take over your life!! I find the social history side of things especially interesting which is very surprising as I hated history at school but it's **my** history and so is very precious.

If any of you fancy starting on this voyage of discovery, good luck and happy hunting!

(P.S. Maureen – I know I owe you some research time – I haven't forgotten and perhaps we can get together soon)

Hatley's churches open this weekend

(Words and photos by East Hatley resident Peter Mann)

Hatley's two medieval churches are open this weekend as part of the Heritage Open Days festival 2020 – today (Friday), tomorrow and Sunday from 11.00 am to 1.00 pm and 2.00 to 4.00 pm.

'St Denis' in East Hatley, built around 1217, made redundant in 1959 and now owned by the Friends of Friendless Churches, is rarely open because of the fragile state of the interior wall surfaces, although the building itself is quite sound.

Why should you go? Because it's empty! Back in the day, churches were devoid of seating, ornaments and almost anything of interest. Churches were used for communal events – for one thing, apart from 'the big house', nearly everyone lived in hovels, basically a simple timber frame with walls made of reinforced mud on a rubble foundation and far from permanent, so the church built, with skill, of field stones would have been an attractive place for parties, meetings and worship.



Look for this sign in East Hatley

'Attractive' is relative – we cannot imagine how horrible it must have been, particularly in winter when Hatley – and Gamlingay – would have been cold, wet, muddy and very smelly. No running water, no loos, no wellies, no duvets, no electricity, no phones, no broadband.....

So, St Denis' is now not so different to how it would have been 800 years ago – there have been some improvements and design changes, a few of which remain for you to come and see.



Hatley St George church is of a similar era, but because of a rebuild in the 1870s, it now has a Victorian feel to it. It is, though, a very compact church for the chancel was demolished in the 1960s due to unsafe crumbling walls – reducing the overall length from 70 ft (17 m) to 40 ft (12 m), quite a significant loss. What was once the great arch into the chancel is now a huge, plain glass east window which makes the church feel very light and airy, despite all the other windows being stained glass with reproductions of a dozen or so saints.

In addition to its feeling of being a pleasant country there are 28 painted wooden shields of the St. George families placed around the walls, a Bevington organ (working order), stained glass windows depicting a saints and carved wooden angels in the roof beams – sometimes wonders if they chat to one another when have gone!



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The tower was added in the 15th century; its top stage was rebuilt in brick in 1625. The tower contains three bells, although the tower and bell frame aren't strong enough to allow the two 17th century bells to be rung. The third, smaller, sanctus bell was re-located from St East Hatley, in 2014. There are some rather good monuments in the church, including two brasses – the Baldwin St. George brass of 1425 and the Catherine Docwra brass from about 100 years later.

There's more information about the open days on the Hatley website:
www.hatley.info/news_events/events/our-churches-will-be-open-for-hod.

From Ann and Richard Edwards....
During lockdown Ann has been busy making these lovely cushions from 'odds and ends'. Richard says they will probably be family Christmas presents – lucky family!



From Valerie:

This beautiful rose from the Miller's garden is still flowering having first bloomed in May! It certainly has been a remarkable year – in more ways than one!

Please contact Brenda Elcome with anything you would like to go in the weekly newsletter BY TUESDAY EVENING

Brenda.elcome@ymail.com or phone 650489

A reminder of some key contact details:

Hilary Young , Parish Priest	hilaryafyoung@gmail.com	650587
Alec Hissett , Gamlingay/Hatley Churchwarden	alechissett@hotmail.com	650052
Chris Miller , LLM/Reader, Gamlingay/Hatley Churchwarden	cfm55@btinternet.com	650779
Valerie Miller , ALM Pastoral	vjm55@btinternet.com	650779
Dawn Martin , Gamlingay/Hatley PCC Secretary	dawnbeckymartin@aol.com	652832
Jane Gurney , Everton Churchwarden		
Ann Naseby , Everton PCC Secretary	annpnaseby@btinternet.com	
Ian Parker , Treasurer to both PCCs	iangparker@hotmail.com	652992
Jane Butcher , Everton Assistant Churchwarden	jane.butcher59@googlemail.com	680105