

Free for All



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

JUNE 2024



We had a great time in May doing another Prayer Space at the school.

Over 3 days we welcomed all 7 classes, over 200 children, to come and explore what prayer is and give it a try. We were amazed by the great stories they told us of what they remembered doing in previous years, and got some great feedback this year as well.

They said things like:

"I feel a bit calming-down and I like all the colours."

"I liked it (the prayer tent) because you can think about what you really wish for."

"Thank you God for everything you've given us and for being with us for a long time."

"Thank you for friends and a world to live in."

"It helped me get my (heavy) thoughts away."

"It reminded me of peace and freedom."

You can see more photos and feedback on our Facebook page, "Venta group of churches".



Dates for Caistor Cream Teas 2024

We are planning to serve Cream Teas at Caistor St Edmund Church again this summer but a little later than in previous years - book these dates !

Sundays

August 18th & 25th 2024



September 1st & 8th 2024

2pm – 5pm

With plants, garden produce and cake stall

We would love to have lots of plants to sell on our stall – if you would like to help please start preparing now by taking cuttings etc



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Did you hear the one about the supermarket that tried to put a tick on some hot cross buns?

Just before Easter this year, word got out that Iceland were going to do just that.

It could almost have been designed to cause outrage. People piled on to complain, all of them convinced it was another sign we were abandoning our Christian roots. It was bad enough when the National Trust did whatever they did with the Easter eggs, but this was a step too far.

The thing is, though, that it was designed to cause outrage. A survey suggested a few people would prefer "hot tick buns", so Iceland made a small number, and aggressively marketed them so lots of other people would complain. Not just complain, either: customers bought 134% more of Iceland's traditional buns in the run-up to this Easter. The bun people knew what they were doing.

Somewhere there has long been something a bit like a tick, of course, is on your Nike clothing. They might say it's a swoosh, but it looks like a tick to me. Whatever you call it, for over 50 years now the symbol has been appearing on their products, ever since it was originally designed to resemble the wings of the original Nike, the Greek goddess of victory.

These thoughts all started to come together for me the other week as I sat and listened to Lyn preach about "overcoming". I started to search through the bible, and realised that many of the times some translations use words like "victory" or "overcome", the original Greek word is the same one that Nike gets her name from.

One of the most famous examples of this is in Paul's amazing victory cry at the end of 1 Corinthians:

Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Of course this is most of all about life rather than death, because the resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate victory, but Easter only makes sense when we look across the whole weekend, and see the Sunday as the glorious completion of the victory that began on Good Friday, as Jesus bore the sting of death for all of us. In the end, the whole of Easter is a glorious victory.

And if that's true, then once again it looks like the bun people knew what they were doing after all.

Rob

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Search Facebook and Youtube for "Venta group of churches"

www.venta-group.org

 [@venta_group](https://twitter.com/venta_group)

CHURCHWARDENS

Stoke Holy Cross & Dunston

Viv (493438) & Andy (07777 675193)

Arminghall

Rob (492305) or Lyn (493422)

Caistor St Edmund

Jani (493572) & Lia (494137)

ST GEORGE'S HALL BOOKINGS:

Rob Baker (492305)

STOKE CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS:

Karen (07761 076954)

email: karenp1963@hotmail.co.uk

STOKE HOLY CROSS PAVILION BOOKINGS:

Dan Ward (Parish clerk) 07563 044849

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your village organisation

IN A FUTURE MAGAZINE

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what we can do!*

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FROM THE REGISTERS

We continue to pray for all those who
have lost loved ones recently, or are
remembering someone particularly at
this time of year.

INTERMENT OF ASHES

JACQUELINE RAMSDEN

Friday 3rd May
at Arminghall

We are always happy to record the
names of anyone from the villages
whose funeral has been held recently,
even if it wasn't taken by a member of
our ministry team.

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send by email to

Henry and Eostre Caswell to
ventafree4all@outlook.com

By 10th of this month please.



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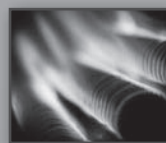
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Flaming June

No, I'm not going to write about the weather.

Neither is this article about the painting by Sir Frederic Leighton of a sleeping woman in an orange dress.

In June 1984 something did come alight for me. My grandmother was the person who encouraged me. I had heard how she had attended a meeting in London 30+ years before when Billy Graham came to the UK. My grandmother had died by 1984 but when my mum heard that he was coming to Norwich, she voiced her opinion/thoughts of him – she had no intention of hearing him. However, being a bit of a rebel at the time, and of course wanting to hear from someone who obviously meant a lot to my grandmother, I wanted to go along!

10 June 1984 the flames of faith were ignited in me. I had known about Jesus through attending Sunday School and singing in the church choir for several years but on 10 June 1984 the head knowledge transferred to my heart. I don't know why or how but it did. Carrow Road wasn't full, but there was a sense of expectation (as there is at every football match) and excitement. There was a stage and a choir (formed of local people) and when Billy Graham came to speak at the podium, he seemed small. Yet his message was simple, understandable and resonated with me.

Billy told us about Jesus and how he had come to the world because God so loved the world that he wanted no one to perish but have eternal life. However, because of the wrong things we do, our sins, there was a chasm or gap between us and God. We try to bridge the gap ourselves by trying to be good, doing good things, going to church, even saying our prayers but we cannot close the gap. Jesus did. He paid the price for my (our) sin and guilt by dying on the cross and has shown us how much he loves us – it was while we were still sinners that Jesus died for us (Romans 5:8).

Some people on that day made a commitment to Jesus for the first time. For me, as I said, I had known about Jesus through going to church for several years already. On that day I recognized my failure to follow Jesus whole heartedly and committed myself to do so. Acknowledging my sins, asking God's forgiveness for living life how I wanted to and saying I wanted to receive Jesus as my Saviour. As I left the football ground it felt like my team had won, I was walking on air and I was wanting to know more, grow more and follow him more deeply. In the days that followed I prayed more than ever I had, I had an insatiable hunger for the bible and found the little gospel (Luke) and booklet I had been given, really gripped me. Billy's message had brought the seed of faith to life but God was growing it, fanning it into flame. After I had finished the booklet a small group of people was formed in my church, which I was invited to join. This small group really helped me, we shared the joys and challenges of following Jesus – as we do in our meetings in the Venta group of churches. Maybe you know a lot about Jesus in your head, maybe this year you will pray the prayer of commitment I did 40 years ago and you will have a Flaming June:

Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I believe you died for my sins. Right now, I turn from my sins and open the door of my heart and life. I receive you as my personal Lord and Saviour. Thank you for saving me now. Amen

Lyn

Our Vicar Rob Baker becomes the Rural Dean for the Loddon group of benefices

On Wednesday evening May 1st Rob was installed at Stoke Church by Bishop Ian Bishop (yes that is his surname) as the rural dean of the Loddon Deanery. Rob takes over from David Owen, the vicar of the Chet Valley churches. Many members of our churches and a number of local clergy were present to congratulate Rob and enjoy a drink and some delicious home-made cakes afterwards. And Bishop Ian even took a selfie photo, as you can see, of Rob with Jonathan, Grace and Sam.



Stoke Holy Cross Thursday Club

We are a friendly local group of over 55's meeting at St. Georges Hall Upper Stoke Holy Cross the first Thursday in the month with a Games Afternoon and Bingo alternate weeks. Do come and join us everyone is very welcome.

Club day 6th June at 1.30pm
(Raffle prize please)

Sheringham Outing for Club members on Wednesday 12th June

Games Afternoons at 1.00pm
Thursday 13th and 27th June
(includes refreshments)

Bingo on Thursday 20th
(Eyes down at 1.30pm)
Raffle prize please

St George's Hall Dementia Support Group



Quiet month in May but the usual cafe was well attended and was buzzing. No cafe was held on 27th as bank holiday.

Dates for June

10th June normal cafe

24th June outing to Southwold

We warmly welcome people living with dementia and their carers to our regular Café sessions in St George's hall, Upper Stoke Holy Cross on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month (except bank holidays) at 10am to 12 midday. There are fun activities also entertainment to enjoy along with good conversation, helpful support and information we also have two subsidised outings a year.

There are no joining fees, just a small charge for refreshments and no referral is necessary. We are pleased to welcome anyone wishing to become a volunteer, a very rewarding thing to do, and a place to meet new friends.

For information call, 01508 493661, 01508 494742, or 01508 495580
Website is www.st.george's-dementia-support-group.uk

Helping our Swifts - our new community project in Stoke Holy Cross



One of the joys of summer is the sight and sound of a party of Swifts cutting through the air with their distinctive screaming calls. They mark the season and when they are suddenly gone in August it feels like summer has gone with them.

By the time you read this in June hopefully the Swifts will be back having completed their amazing annual journey from Africa. Many birds make an annual migration to breed here but there's something special about Swifts, not least the way they've tied themselves to our lives.

Once Swifts would have nested in caves, tree holes and cliff crevices but the UK population now depends almost entirely on our buildings for nest sites but if it wasn't for their screaming aerial displays you probably wouldn't know they were there. Their nest, a shallow cup made from any materials the Swift can catch in flight, is usually built under the eaves of old buildings but we increasingly deny them the spaces that they need as we renovate our houses and new buildings do not have spaces for them.

Swifts are on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern in the UK, with numbers falling by an estimated 62% between 1995 and 2021 (source: RSPB). While climate change and declines in available insect food are factors, the lack of nest sites is seen as the main cause. Sadly, despite considerable support, a proposal to make Swift bricks part of every new property was rejected by Parliament last year but, like many communities, we can take action locally.

In Stoke Holy Cross we are fortunate to still have a small but well established breeding colony on Long Lane and our project aims to support that colony and provide new sites in the village.

Thanks to a grant from SNDC we have purchased an initial batch of Swift nest boxes to put on properties where the Swifts are already present. Attracting Swifts to a new location is difficult and needs patience as they keep to established colonies but youngsters looking for a site can be attracted by the sound of other Swifts. Thanks to Danny, who has already been successful in attracting Swifts on Norwich Road, we will try to attract them to the new Community Hall by installing Swift bricks and playing their calls.

Dave Jones

You can follow our progress on social media and on our website <https://shxmeadowmakers.wixsite.com/jubileemeadow/helping-our-swifts>



Arminghall War Grave

Last year I was contacted by a trustee of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission about cleaning the war grave in Arminghall churchyard. Of course, we welcomed his offer of cleaning the grave but I asked if anything was known of the circumstances surrounding Leading Aircraftman Clifford Eastell's death. This month is the 80th anniversary of D-Day and it seems a good time to share what happened.

Clifford was accidentally killed whilst riding a bicycle through colliding with a person in the road. He suffered a cerebral haemorrhage following a fractured skull. The place of death: Whitehill Lane, Gravesend. Websites show him as being part of the RAF's 6021 Servicing Echelon which was at RAF Gravesend from 17 April – 16 Jun 1944, presumably positioned to support D Day.

The 1939 register was conducted in September 1939 at the outbreak of the war and included civilians only, with the aim of helping in management of the population in respect of ID cards etc. The register shows the Eastell family of four - Harry and Nita with Clifford and his older brother Hector - living at the Council Houses. Harry is described as a flour mill worker. The baptism record from 1918 shows Hector on the first page with Clifford in 1921 on the second. Harry was in 1918 described as a cowman and the address as Rose Cottage, Arminghall. Clifford was buried in Arminghall on 26th April 1944 and originally it appears the family chose a private memorial stone which was later replaced by the standard Commission white Portland stone headstone, possibly after the original stone failed.

No trace has been found in military records of a Hector Eastell so, if he was in military service, he appears to have survived the war. Maybe one of our readers knows more about the Eastell family?

Lyn

PS We will be remembering D-Day in our 10am communion service in Stoke Holy Cross Church Hall on 6 June. If you know of local families who were affected by that event, please join us.

Caistor St Edmund Church and the Norfolk Archaeological Trust are building for the future: find out more here, and on Sunday 23rd June from 4-7pm at the church.



Visitor Survey - Caistor Roman Town Church



Things people tell us about the church building:

"It's a peaceful space."

"It gave me quiet I didn't realise I needed."

- **Why are you doing this?**

The church has a vision for a space where people connect more and more with one another and with God in the years to come. We want to make room for the whole community, and for people coming from further afield, especially through our partnership with NAT.

The Norfolk Archaeological Trust want to grow their charitable work by having a visitor centre, office space, and a place for community events, to reach the 80,00 annual visitors to this site.

- **What are you going to do?**

We are in the preliminary stages of an ambitious building project, which will add a second floor to an expanded extension to provide better facilities for everyone, and office space for NAT. The nave (main area of the church) will be repurposed into flexible space for a whole range of events, leaving the chancel (choir area) left as it is for regular worship.

- **How will you pay for this?**

NAT and the church have some funds available, but most of this will be met by grant applications.

- **When can I find out more?**

We are having an open evening at the church on Sunday 23rd June, from 4-7pm. There will be tea, coffee and cake, and the chance to look at plans, and meet church and NAT reps to ask your questions. We'll be doing a brief presentation at 6pm. We'd love to get your feedback, so please come along, or if you can't make it, just scan the QR code above and send in your thoughts from 23rd June.

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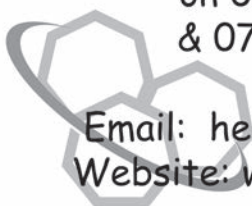


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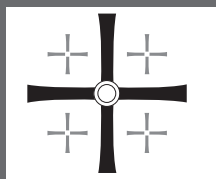


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Tuesday to Saturday mornings

9am Mon-Fri
10am Sat

Zoom—contact us to join
(except Sat 29th June)

Prayer meeting
with Bible reading

Midweek gatherings in June

5th June

Arminghall church open for refreshments from 2pm,
finishing with Evening Prayer at about 3.30

6th June

10am at the Church Hall

Communion

6th & 20th June

10.30am at the Church Hall

Coffee and Chat

Sunday mornings at 9.30am

2nd June

Caistor St Edmund

Praise & Worship

16th June

Caistor St Edmund

Holy Communion

Sunday mornings at Stoke Holy Cross at 10.30am

2nd & 16th June

Morning Worship with children's group

9th & 23rd June

Morning Worship with Holy Communion & children's group

Saturday 29th/Sunday 30th June—Kirsty's ordination weekend

Saturday 10.30am at the Cathedral, ordination service—all welcome

Sunday 10am at Poringland, Kirsty leading joint communion service for Venta and Poringland churches

Sunday afternoons and evenings in June

2nd June

Evening Prayer at Dunston, 6.30pm

9th & 23rd June

All Invited— Food, Fun and Faith for all
from 3.30pm-5pm at the Church Hall

16th June

Prayer and Praise at 6pm at Stoke

Join us to worship, pray and listen to God

Coffee and chat

4th April 18th April
2nd May 16th May
6th June 20th June
4th July 18th July



Communion at 10am
on first Thursdays

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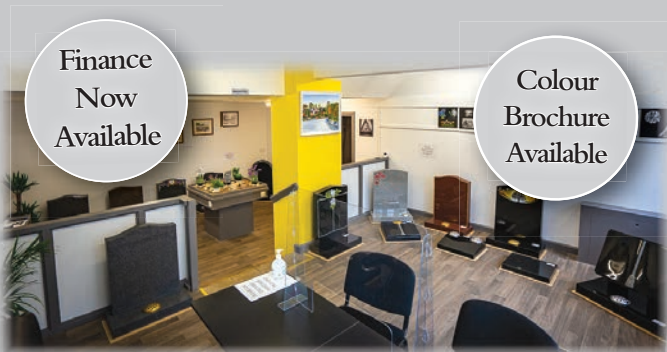
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