

## The Preservation of Country Churches

We do tend to take “the norm” for granted. I live in Alsager within walking distance to two Anglican, a Methodist and Roman Catholic active Churches. This month whilst on a

family history research trip to Bedfordshire, I became aware of the differing experiences of many others.

Parishes have united under one incumbent, historic churches have closed and some have been put to other uses. Happily, the Churches Conservation Trust have supported, amongst hundreds of others, the one I visited, the church of St Margaret of Antioch in Knotting. The first documented record of the church is in 1174. It stands in the middle of its churchyard



and appears to date from about 1130 when the nave and chancel were built.

The chancel was closed off by spiked gates installed in 1637 and kept locked except during times of divine service so as to prevent cock-fighting from taking place. (Arthur Alvey, a 17th century rector, held the stakes in the betting at cock fights and was later ejected from his post.

St Margaret’s was vested with The Churches Conservation Trust in 2009-the small population of Knotting were finding it increasingly difficult to maintain the building. The church is kept open in daylight hours most days and is carefully tended by the Trust. The local area boasts many beautiful Medieval churches but some have ministers serving up to 7 or 8 united parishes. The visit to this area brought home to me the message in Len Griffin’s article in last month’s Parish News which highlighted the importance of the preservation and upkeep of St Bertoline’s Barthomley

Thousands of England’s most ancient and historic church buildings are now standing empty and unused almost all of the time. By law they cannot be demolished. Redundant churches are by far one of the nation’s most greatest conservation challenges. Ed



Scan to donate to St. Bertoline's Church. Help to meet its escalating costs.

## From The Rectory

Do you know what is the best thing God has ever made ?

That is something I used to ask when talking to youngsters in an assembly or in church. I would take a cardboard box and say “in this box is the best thing God has ever made.” In the box would be sweets, money, football shirt, various things. I would take each item out in turn and ask “is this the best thing God has ever made?” Some youngsters would nod their heads – many were not sure. “These are all very good but they are not the best thing God has ever made” I would say.

“Would you like to look in the box and see the best thing God has ever made ?”

The youngsters came forward in turn and looked into the box . At the bottom of the box was a mirror. So when the youngsters looked down into the box they saw themselves. They saw the best thing God has ever made.

God says of Jesus “This is my Son, the Beloved.”

And what God says of Jesus, he also says to each one of us. “You are made in my image and likeness, you are loved unconditionally, you are my beloved.” Or to borrow what I told the youngsters – we are the best thing God has ever made.

Sometimes it is difficult to recognise that we are made in the image of God, that we are loved unconditionally and that we are very good.

Now we are in the main summer time of the year perhaps as we take a break, enjoy ourselves at home or away, however we spend the coming weeks- spare a moment in quiet reflection and ask for the gift to see ourselves as God sees us. Find a few moments and listen to the still, small voice of calm telling us that we are loved: that we are the best thing God has ever made.

I hope you enjoy the Summer that we do get some sunshine and warmth not been the best of weather I know but we can still appreciate the blessings which surround us . The beauty of creation, the joy of companionship, find God’s presence in every summer breeze, perhaps pursue dreams, embrace new beginnings. Remembering that “You are the best thing God has ever made.”

With every Blessing

Peter

# 'The Wayfaring Stranger'

By Lauren Scott

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2024, 3pm,  
St Bertoline's Church, Barthomley



An afternoon of scintillating harp  
music with Fizz included!

Tickets: Adult £15, Child £7.50

Contact Simon

07766655066/simonmgresty@gmail.com

(prebooking required)

## BARTHOMLEY WI PRESS RELEASE for JUNE 2024

We are certainly enjoying a variety of speakers this year at Barthomley. We have learned about the valuable work carried out by local support agencies., ways to keep healthy, and have even been coached in how to discover our own “style personality” by an image consultant! However, the other speakers we have enjoyed all share a passion for preservation and work within the natural environment. By sharing their knowledge and understanding of how best to enjoy and help preserve them.



John Cockell came to our meeting in June to tell us about the Congleton Bath House and Physic Garden. Built in 1820, it originally belonged to Bradshaw House on Lawton Street. Before the members arrived at the hall that evening John had displayed many photos around the room which helped to create a feeling of being in a peaceful wood or private garden. The bath-house itself is a small brick building, partially hidden by trees and bushes on a rough triangular plot of land and there is now a path through the garden which offers a pleasant and traffic-free walk to the town centre from Canal Road.

It was rescued from demolition and a Physic Garden created by Congleton Building Preservation Trust. The Bath House itself contains a spring fed plunge pool, dating from the time when cold water bathing was popular and renowned for its health benefits – (which I think maybe a popular belief now). The physic garden is also extensively planted with medicinal and herbal plants. It's a visit I'm sure our members would like to make. Our next Meeting will be on 2nd July at Barthomley Village Hall. The meeting starts at 7 pm and features another familiar landscape! You are more that welcome to join us.

### The Tea Set

£3 including afternoon tea.  
Tuesday 16th July at 2pm.

A talk from Colin Baxter on  
The life of a Cheshire Vet.

Colin has many years of experience working in the local area as a  
vet with farm animals and pets.

Please join us for an interesting and informative talk.

**“A mistake is proof that someone was at least trying to accomplish something”**