

# Grapevine

August / September 2007

Parish Magazine

St. Luke with St. Bartholomew





## Mary Turner

Mary was a long term member of St Luke's church. In her will she left the church nearly £200,000.

Some years before she had asked the vicar what he thought the new roof would cost and he said £200,000. Several years ago he had had an estimate of £180,000.

With the main work on the church complete, the bell tower repaired and most of the guttering repaired, bills still seem at the lower end of realistic expectations, under £150,000.

The Kemp East Windows will be protected and work has already started. They should be up in the early Autumn. We expect to be able to replace the sound system and still have some money left over for other works.

Thanks are due to Mary, and to all those who have brought the project in at reasonable cost, not least Nick Bowley Roofing and Matt Andrews.

# Weathering the Storm



Nigel Hardcastle

**A**s you may know, my Aunt, Grace Petterssen, for whom we have been praying, died recently at 91 years of age. I have been helping sort out her affairs.

In her house I found a copy of her husband, Sverre Petterssen's autobiography, "Weathering the storm". It has been interesting to read and learn more about the man, from time to time coming across the well know family stories.

So this article is about:

- My Uncle Sverre, and my Aunt Grace,
- My first great evil act, which I cannot remember but which I am never allowed to forget, and
- Two very different and important ways of relating to nature:
  1. That of the scientist, for Sverre was a famous meteorologist who discovered what we now call the "jet Stream", predicted the weather for Admunsen's flight cross the north pole and most famously the weather for D day.
  2. And the relation of a people living directly dependant on nature which was very much the experience of Sverre and his family in the last days of the 19<sup>th</sup> and first days of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

## The Early Years

Sverre was born in 1898. His first memory was in 1900. It was of the small and crowded cabin where the family lived, 200 miles north of the Arctic circle in the Lofoten Islands. The family had made the cabin themselves of planks and birch bark. The roof was covered with turf and the wall banked up with turf as high as the window sills. This was to try, not always successfully, to anchor the cabin in the Arctic gales, and to provide some insulation against the Arctic winter. The cabin looked out over Eidsfjord to Mount Reka from which, by local tradition all storms came.



They had a farm of four acres, a cow for milk, three sheep and a potato plot. Naturally farms of this size did not support a family. Most local people worked as fishermen, but, by the time Sverre could remember, his father worked as a travelling salesman. Mother spent several weeks a year weaving the cloth for most of their clothes.

With them lived Sverre's maternal grandfather, Petter Hansen, who indeed had been the head man of an Attring, a fishing boat descendent of the Viking long ships. He was famed for his skill in navigating by sound. In those latitudes the sun does not rise for two months and in snow storms nothing can be seen. It was said he could navigate

among the underwater reefs, knowing where he was because he could recognise the different reefs by the different sound of the waves breaking over them. It was said of Grandfather Petter that he had saved 17 fisherman's lives. Sometimes when the storm was too great to come up on the lee side of a capsized boat he would sail across the upturned hull in his Attring a few times, picking up a man or two on each crossing. It was said of Grandfather Petter that he was, "the most daring and most cautious of men."

Grandfather Petter loved onion which was of course a great luxury so far north. He was allowed a slice a day!

Sverre tells of how the Beaufort scale measured winds by the damage to ships and their sails. His mother measured the storms by the suffering they caused. Sometimes the damage was only a few years of grinding hardship to replace lost gear or a boat. Another might be "the storm that left 6 widows". Living in touch with nature is also dying in touch with nature.

When Sverre was about 12 and his brother Petter about 14, they were for the first time allowed to slaughter a sheep. They loved their animals and lived closely with them but were not sentimental when the time for slaughter came. Nature is life and death. Life close to nature causes great, necessary virtues but is not a life anyone who knows it would idealise or choose.

## **Becoming a Scientist**

Sverre saw the educated people, doctor, judge and priest. He wanted what they had. Schooling lasted until 15 but with only one teacher each child spent two weeks at school and four off. Eventually when the family moved he planned to get a secondary education by joining the army college

for warrant officers in Trondheim. From there he won a scholarship to Oslo University. He had planned to study humanities but discovered that if he studied science there was some teaching work to be had to provide the living costs.

At this time modern scientific meteorology had only just been invented by the famous Bergen school. A lecturer suggested he take this up and was finally convinced by discussing the Ryder storm with Bergeron. This was a storm that Ryder did not predict but which Bergeron did. It was a small, innocent looking depression in the wake of a previous storm but Bergeron realised the temperature differences around it would add to its power.

Working as a meteorologist in Norway he predicted the weather for Admunsen's flight across the Atlantic in a dirigible balloon. He then moved to the chair of meteorology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

## **War and Grace**

He came to England when Norway was invaded to rejoin the Norwegian army. Sensibly they did not ask him to become a drill sergeant again but loaned him to be head of the upper air branch of the Meteorological office.

My Aunt was working for the actuarial department of the Prudential before the war. She used her mathematical skills for the met office and became his personal assistant and eventually his wife.

## **D Day**

During the war Sverre began to gather data supporting the idea that there were fast currents in the upper air that we call jet streams. At the time all weather forecasts and

meteorology were classified but he would use his notes after the war.

Sverre made weather forecasts for bombing raids. The most famous forecast he played a leading part in was the weather for D day. You may know the story.

On the day originally chosen for the invasion of France a great storm hit the channel. It looked as if the invasion would have to be put off for weeks. However, Sverre and others help predict a couple of days of relatively calm weather of which the Germans knew nothing, starting a day later than originally planned. Thus Rommel, who was in charge of Northern France, went back to Germany sure no invasion was possible. No one dared wake Hitler and so the panzers were not released to attack the landing troops until, they were well inland.

### **Unremembered and Unforgotten**

For a few years after the war Sverre worked in Norway. My parents visited them when I was about 10 months. I could not walk or crawl but was a "bottom shuffler". I was left in their living room for a short while alone, sitting on my aunts white carpet.

Before they left Auntie Grace put a bottle of ink in the top draw of a desk saying, "Don't play with this." You can predict what happened.

I do not remember this, but no one in the family has ever let me forget. Auntie Eileen, Sverre's daughter by a previous marriage, showed me where on the carpet it had happened when I met her clearing up the house last week. The carpet is still in Grace's 59 years and two months after my first great act of evil!

# Prayer Diary for August

Wednesday	1	S Alphonsus Liguori	Theologians
Thursday	2		Prayer Groups
Friday	3	S Lydia	New Christians
Saturday	4	S John Vianney	The Clergy
Sunday	5	18 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time	The Parish
Monday	6	The Transfiguration of the Lord	For Understanding
Tuesday	7		Thanksgiving for the Sacrament
Wednesday	8	S Dominic	Astronomers
Thursday	9		The Choir
Friday	10	S Lawrence	Those working with the poor
Saturday	11	S Clare	Opticians
Sunday	12	19 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time	The Parish
Monday	13		Nurses
Tuesday	14	S Maximilian Kolbe	Those imprisoned unjustly
Wednesday	15		Our departed loved ones
Thursday	16	S Stephen of Hungary	The people of Hungary
Friday	17	S Hyacinth	The people of Poland
Saturday	18		Those who encourage others
Sunday	19	S Bartholomew's Patronal Festival	The Parish
Monday	20	S Bernard of Clairvaux	Monks and Nuns
Tuesday	21		The Sick
Wednesday	22		Regenerate
Thursday	23	S Rose of Lima	Latin America
Friday	24	S Bartholomew	Our Church
Saturday	25		The PCC
Sunday	26	21 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time	The Parish
Monday	27	S Monica	Mothers
Tuesday	28		Teachers
Wednesday	29		Bishops
Thursday	30		The Servers
Friday	31		Missionaries

# Prayer Diary for September

Saturday	1	S Giles	Those with disabilities
Sunday	2	22 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time	The Parish
Monday	3		Those experiencing doubt
Tuesday	4		Housegroups
Wednesday	5		School Children
Thursday	6		The Gang
Friday	7		Those seeking a Faith
Saturday	8	The Blessed Virgin's Birthday	Our Walsingham Cell
Sunday	9	23 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time	The Parish
Monday	10		Those in Hospital
Tuesday	11		Monks and Nuns
Wednesday	12		The Town of Reading
Thursday	13	S John Chrysostum	Local Clergy
Friday	14		Those seeking for Peace
Saturday	15		The Bereaved
Sunday	16	24 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time	The Parish
Monday	17		The Sunday School
Tuesday	18		Those who suffer
Wednesday	19		Mums and Tots
Thursday	20		Doctors
Friday	21	S Matthew	Bankers
Saturday	22		Fathers
Sunday	23	25 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time	The Parish
Monday	24		Musicians
Tuesday	25		Pilgrims
Wednesday	26	S Cosmas and S Damian	Pharmacists
Thursday	27	S Vincent de Paul	Charity Workers
Friday	28	S Wenceslaus	Governments
Saturday	29	S Michael and all the Angels	Ordinands
Sunday	30	26 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time	The Parish

# St Luke's Sunday School Family Outing



Sally-Ann McDowell

This year we decided to have our Sunday School Summer outing to Bucklebury Farm Park. Seven Sunday School children were able to attend along with Zoe and Amanda, our helpers. We chose 22<sup>nd</sup> July after the celebration of the new roof, and we couldn't have chosen a better date. The recent inclement weather held off and although it was not hot, the weather was pleasantly warm and we saw some sunshine.

The park is a family friendly size, whereby the children could wander off and play in the adventure playground or go down one of the slides indoors, while the adults could have a cup of tea and a chat. Some adults rather liked the gentle yellow slide, but the older children (and one adventurous father – I shan't mention names!) were very keen on the almost vertical slide that apparently makes your heart race rather fast!

We fed lots of goats and sheep who seemed very greedy – maybe they had not seen many people recently because of the rain and the the children got to chance to have a rabbit or guinea pig on their lap and pet it. I think one or two would have liked to bring them home.

Finally, we all got on the trailer attached to the tractor and went into the deer field where the tractor stopped near the deer. The deer knew what was happening and ran towards us. These were definitely not frightened animals – they knew any minute the deer feed would be produced and sure enough, the children were allowed to hand feed the 12 year old stag called Dumbledore who was very friendly.

## From the Editor

**W**ell. Wasn't the new roof at St. Luke's put up in the nick of time?

The wettest Summer on record, it's set to be. I hope the weather has brightened up by the time you read this. It can't be at all great for the farmers and their crops. Apparently there's been a rush on last minute foreign holidays – not great for our own tourism trade either.

Things will pick up again, though – they always seem to for us in England, one way or another. No widespread loss of life or disease. As a country, we are incredibly fortunate, despite the inconveniences, financial disruptions and other worries and problems that beset us individually.

Having a “wonderful Summer” is as much to do with attitude of mind, as it is the weather, for most of us, but we should certainly spare our thoughts and time for those who are affected by events and circumstances over the season.

*Julian*

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