



Cobham & Luddesdowne News

July 2025

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Priest-in-Charge – The Rev'd Canon Alyson Davie

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Phone no. 01474-812068 email:- alyson@stjohnsmeopham.co.uk
(Rest Day: Friday)

Pastoral assistant- Janet Weaver, 36 Highview, Vigo Village, DA13 0RR
(01732) 823936

Church Safeguarding Officer - Hilary Savage - (01634) 723027

Church Office Phone no. 01474 813495

Church Officers of St. Mary Magdalene, Cobham

Lay Chair	Hilary Savage	
Churchwarden	Hilary Savage	(01634) 723027
PCC Secretary	Ron Chamberlain	(01474) 814250
Treasurer	Jeffrey Julie-Rusz	07946 249021
Deanery Synod	Hilary Savage	

Church Officers St Peter and St. Paul, Luddesdowne

Lay Chair	Sue Campbell	
Treasurer	Janet Weaver	(01732) 823936

Parochial Church Council Members

Cobham

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Ron Chamberlain
David Palmer
Lynn Ruddock

Luddesdowne

Diana Bampton
Jill Beety
Sue Campbell
Janet Weaver

SUBMISSIONS Cobham and Luddesdowne News is a community magazine produced by and for the residents of Cobham, Sole Street and Luddesdowne.

Please send material for inclusion by the 15th of the month preceding publication to editorialcln@gmail.com

Cover photograph Adrian Whiteing—St Mary's Church Room

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July
2025

Church News - CofE attendance rises for fourth year

Attendance at C of E churches grew for the fourth year in a row last year. The overall number of regular worshippers across the Church of England's congregations grew to 1.02 million in 2024, a rise of 1.2 per cent, according to an early snapshot of the annual Statistics for Mission findings.

It was the second year in a row in which the Church of England's 'worshipping community' – the combined number of regular members of local congregations – has stood above a million since the Covid-19 pandemic. The numbers in the pews on a typical Sunday was up by a further 1.5 per cent to 582,000 in 2024, extending rises over recent years.

And overall, the in-person attendance across the week edged upwards by 1.2 per cent in a year, and stood at just over 701,000 last year, according to the early figures. The increase was driven by a recovery in attendance by adults (over 16), among whom average Sunday attendance was up by 1.8 per cent, and weekly attendance rose by 1.5 per cent. While the overall figures show that in-person attendance has not fully reached pre-pandemic levels, the figures suggest it is moving closer to the pre-pandemic trend.

The preliminary snapshot of Statistics for Mission returns follows separate figures which show there has also been a sharp increase in traffic on the Church of England's church-finder website, AChurchNearYou.com. The number of page visits to AChurchNearYou.com jumped by 55 per cent last year to almost 200 million as people searched for their local congregation.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said: "The Church of England exists to share the good news of Jesus Christ. So it is encouraging to see further signs that more people are coming to faith in Jesus Christ and having their lives changed. "Although this is just a snapshot and we don't know the ages of those who have started attending church in the past year, other evidence suggests that many of these are young adults.

Debbie Clinton, the Church of England's Director for Vision and Strategy, said: "Our statistics are much more than numbers, each represents an individual. In 2024 we have heard and seen exciting stories of growth in parishes, in our estates and in post-industrial and coastal towns. "Nationally we aim to ensure that each young person has a flourishing children, youth and families' ministry within reach of them, we are seeing growth in the number of churches with more than 25 young people attending."



**ST. MARY'S CHURCH ROOM CELEBRATION, DISPLAY,
GARDEN SAFARI AND EVENING (Su's Toast from the Evening
Celebrations at Sole St House))**

It has been my privilege to be chairman of the Local Funding Group for 7 years.

The restored Church Room is now complete. It is the efforts of the LFG Committee with the village that has resulted in a restored building to be proud of while retaining its original character.

I have gained the most, by your trust, support and friendship. I propose a toast to you all, please join me by raising your glass as I say, 'Thank you' and 'Here's to Village Life'!

Susan Rowe

The hiring of St Mary's Church Room, Sole Street

The refurbishment of the St. Mary's Church Room is now complete and the hall is available for hire.

With a capacity of 40, the fully accessible hall may be hired at a cost of £12.00 an hour for Cobham and Sole St. residents

(a slight reduction is available for regular hirers,
the charge for "out of area" persons being £15.00 per hour).

Minimum hire period, 2 hours,

There are restrictions on some forms of use.

If interested, please contact the Bookings Officer.

Mrs Lynn Ruddock on 07928 700490

for a copy of the hire conditions and a Booking Form.

The cost of the hire and a deposit are payable in advance.

Ron Chamberlain

Gravesham Choral Society presents

Tales of Land and Sea

North Country Folk Songs Philip Wilby

Horizons Andrew Carter

The Sprig of Thyme John Rutter

Saturday 12th July at 7.30pm

St George's Church, Gravesend DA11 0DJ

Conducted by Francesca Massey

Accompanied by Debbi Parks

Tickets from www.graveshamcs.co.uk

£15 adults (£16 on the door) £5 under 18's (£6 on the door)



LOCAL FUNDING GROUP'24

COFFEE MORNING

Thursday, 10th July

ST. MARY'S CHURCH ROOM 10.30 – 12.00

Meet friends and make friends

£3.00 for tea/coffee , cake and conversation

Supporting the Ellenor Hospice

Raffle, Bring & Buy



1st Cobham Brownies
(Tuesday evenings during term time only at The Meadow Rooms, Cobham)

At Brownies, we welcome all girls from 7 to 10 years old for non-stop fun, learning and adventure. Brownies get to explore their creative side, get out into the great outdoors, and start to learn to look after themselves, others and the world we live in.

Please email Wendy Ostridge (wendy.minister@googlemail.com) if you would like more information about 1st Cobham Brownies or register your interest through the Girlguiding website at www.girlguiding.org.uk/joinus/ and selecting 1st Cobham Brownies.

We look forward to meeting new members.

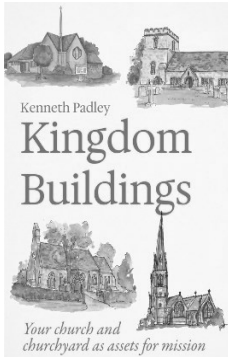
Luddesdown & District Rights of Way Group.

We are a small friendly group that usually walks from The Cock Inn, Henley Street, Luddesdown, Gravesend DA13 0XB, at 11am on Wednesdays. We walk at a gentle pace for some 90 minutes in beautiful countryside. Occasionally we lead weekend walks.

With four Socials a year in Luddesdown Village Hall and a twice yearly Newsletter, we would be delighted if you joined us for a walk or two. Becoming a member costs £7 per person a year.

Please contact Walks Co-ordinator Janet Ferguson, preferably by email janetferguson@hotmail.fr . Ian Sheridan, Acting Chairman, 07951 927 517

Book Reviews



Kingdom Buildings - your church and churchyard as assets for mission By Kenneth Padley, Canterbury Press, £20

Kingdom Buildings sees the potential of church buildings and grounds as tools for mission and growth. Too often seen as burdens, this practical guide helps church communities rediscover them as gifts – as spaces that can enrich both congregational life and the wider community.

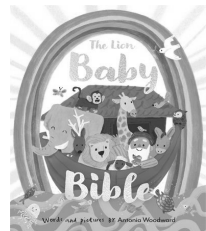
Blending theology, ecclesiology and hands-on advice, Kingdom Buildings offers practical steps with how to tackle even the most daunting challenges. Small, affordable changes can spark momentum and create lasting impact, while making wise, long-term decisions can be for the good of future generations.

It's all there in this book: planning permissions, welcome signs, unstaffed opening, accessibility, carbon reduction, ecological stewardship, heating, lighting, solar panels, EV charging, community spaces, toilets, kitchenettes, cafes, children's corners, church halls, and how to transform your churchyard from a jungle to a sacred space.

The Lion Baby Bible

By Antonia Woodward, SPCK, £11.99

This beautifully illustrated first children's Bible for the very young (0 to 2-year-olds) would make the ideal gift for a newborn baby as a Christening, Dedication, or Baptism present.



The Lion Baby Bible includes 45 stories from the Old and New Testaments. Each story is simply and beautifully retold in a very few words, with a biblical truth about God's love for the world and our special relationship as His children.

This book will help you to share precious moments with your young child, as you enjoy showing them the illustrations, and introducing key events, people, and Jesus' teaching from the Bible.

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What a busy June!

In June the Society had a very busy and successful month. 45 members and guests had a great day out by coach to RHS Hyde Hall. Although cloudy, the weather was kind. The gardens were varied including a dry garden and the Cottage Gardens were particularly stunning.



A few days later we held our Summer Show, once again we were lucky with the weather with the torrential rain not hitting Cobham until the show was over. We had a record number of entries the number of Roses was amazing with a superb scent filling the room. There were a lot of visitors, who having viewed the show then enjoyed homemade cake and tea whilst buying plants from our plant sellers.

Our judge, Dr John Hughes, who has judged our Summer show for over 9 years, said the show was the best he had judged in Cobham and one of the best local shows this year.

Our next show is our Autumn Show on Saturday 13th September; make a note in your diary it really is a great afternoon out.

If the show has inspired you to join us membership to Cobham Gardeners' Society is only £10 a year, which gives you free access to our talks plus discounts at local nurseries and on our trips. For more information or to join email cobhamgs@hotmail.co.uk

Cont'd page 16

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Cobham to Henley Street walk (Footpath walk)

Guide: Jenny Ellett 01474 361977

Sunday 20st July 2025

Meet: 2.30pm at Cobham Church,
The Street, Cobham DA12 3DB

Free-open to all-a Gravesend Historical
Society Footpaths Committee
walk

Cobham Hall-open to the public

On: Sunday 20th July 2025

Tours begin at 2pm-last tour is 4pm.

Christoph Bull will be one of the
guides on duty

Cost: £6.00- for the tour. Cream teas
can be purchased at extra cost

No need to book-just turn up and
understand the importance of this
building and the families who lived
here to our local history.

SOLE STREET WI

At our AGM our President for the past 6 years, Yvonne, stepped down and following the count, Helen was pronounced our new President. We held a quiz to test our knowledge on this year's proposed national Resolution "Bystanders Can Be Lifesavers" on which members voted in favour.

We were all delighted to participate in Su Rowe's Celebration Weekend for the renovation of St Mary's Church Room, where we served refreshments and home-made cake, at Sole Street House.

For the Garden Safari our craft group had created a number of scarecrows representing characters from children's fiction which were erected for children to find around the village safari route.



"Bill and Ben - The Flowerpot Men"

(which were actually adopted by a young local fan and now reside in a garden in Sole Street !)

At the following Craft Group meeting members dabbled in pebble painting to create a game of tic-tac-toe in a bag to be sold at this year's Christmas Fair.

Our next outing is a midsummer tour of Cobham Hall and Cream Tea. The speaker at our next main meeting on Tuesday 22nd July at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Room will be Susan Shaw who will be telling us all about "An Adventure in Peru".

Weekly walks continue every Tuesday and craft group meet every month. For information on this and all our activities please contact our President, Helen, telephone 01474 812448.

Molly Isaacs

Lewis Solomon

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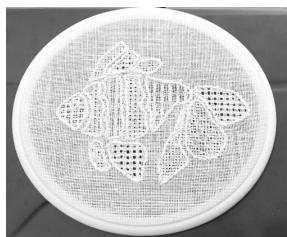


Hello everyone, believe it or not, our group has been in existence for four years now. We have plenty of enthusiastic members and all our committee posts are filled.

This is something to celebrate and as you can see, there was only one way to do it - by stitching of course!



Veronica has planned another new and exciting programme (see our website), for which we are grateful as she steps down from the role of Programme Secretary. Lorraine and Sue will be taking over and we wish them well. Anita too is stepping down from cake making but we have agreed that members will take it in turns to supply cakes for our monthly meetings so all is not lost! Thank you, ladies, for all your hard work. After our AGM we had a chance to look at some of the photos from our archive and also to see the collections of stitched postcards that some of our members had compiled over the months. There was so much beautiful work to be seen. Some ladies had brought along pieces that they had recently finished including some of the 'stitchscapes' started in March with Beth Power from <https://www.dottytextiles.com/>. I will show you these later in the year but here you can see a beautiful piece of pulled thread work by Sue D. Sue will be running a workshop on this technique later.





If you would maybe like to start a new hobby and to join our group or would just like to find out a bit more about us then please pay us a visit - look at our website <https://northkentembroiderers.co.uk/> or email us at: info@northkentembroiderers.co.uk



or contact our Chairman, Eileen on 01474 324734.

Happy stitching, Karen

All photos with permission.

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TWO WOMEN EVENTS

Forthcoming TWO Women events

5th July - PARTY IN THE PARK

24th July - Abba Revival

16th October - The Bon Jovi Experience

6th November - Fleetwood Bac

27th November - Totally Blondie



The **1st South Street BBGA Company** meets every Friday evening during term time 6pm-7.30pm at South Street Baptist Church, Wrotham Road, Meopham, DA13 0QJ (next to Hope Hill).

Boys and girls aged 5-18 years are warmly invited to join us for games, craft, cooking, Bible stories and outdoor activities. The weekly subscription is £2. The last day of term is on 18th July.

The Boys Brigade Water Activities Centre in Tonbridge teaches kayaking, canoeing and stand-up paddle boarding. Summer camps take place at the Honey Hill Boys Brigade Campsite in Maidstone.

For more information about Boys Brigade please visit

www.BOYS-BRIGADE.org.uk

SONG TIME meets every Monday morning 9.45am-11am for families with babies and children under five. There is a varied selection of toys, including a slide, ball pool, construction toys, creative activities and singing. Family admission is £1. The last day of term is on 21st July.

SOUTH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH Sunday services all begin at 10.45am and finish about midday. The Family Service is on Sunday 27th July.

Please visit **www.southstreetbaptist.org.uk** or ring 01474 815039 or 01474 813379 for more information about activities for families at SOUTH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH.



July

In the meantime, Summer we hope is progressing or at last arriving at least!!
 July is usually one of the hottest months of the year and a great time to sit out and enjoy your garden. Keep plants looking good by regularly dead-heading, and you'll enjoy a longer display of blooms. Make sure you keep new plants well-watered, using grey water where possible, and hoe off weeds, which thrive in the sunshine.
 Top 10 RHS jobs this month

1. Check clematis for signs of clematis wilt
2. Care for houseplant while on holiday
3. Water tubs and new plants if dry, but be water-wise
4. Deadhead bedding plants and repeat-flowering perennials, to ensure continuous flowering
5. Pick courgettes before they become marrows
6. Treat apple scab
7. Clear algae, blanket weed and debris from ponds, and keep them topped up
8. Order catalogues for next year's spring-flowering bulbs
9. Give the lawn a quick-acting summer feed, especially if not given a spring feed
10. Harvest apricots, peaches, and nectarines



Meetings & Shows at the Meadow Room in Dickensian Cobham, Kent
 SatNav DA123BZ Registered Charity No 228007

Saturday 13th September 2025 - 2:00-3:30pm
Cobham Gardeners' Society

Autumn Show & Plant Sale

Gardening Tips *Adult & Junior Show Categories
Flowers, Vegetables, Preserves & Photographic
Tea, coffee & home made cake on sale

Free Entry. Extra car parking Cobham Cricket Club



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BELL RINGING by Peter Hartley

May is a month when bell ringers think of touring other church towers. On the 10th, a day of unbroken sunshine, I was lucky enough to be driven through white froths of May blossom and cow-parsley and villages of fluttering flags and bunting in celebration of the 80th Anniversary of VE Day.

We ringers gathered at Lympe where the massive Norman church tower now has 8 bells augmented in 2015 from the 6 when I last rang here twenty years ago. Having rung I descended the iron spiral stairs to sit in the churchyard on a fine new teak seat gazing out across the vast view of Romney Marsh and the glittering English Channel beyond. A gentleman was watering sunflowers and we talked. I learnt his daughter Megan loved sunflowers and elephants which were etched on her seat which I was enjoying. Megan had died of an aggressive leukaemia aged 29 and now I could thank her father for such a lovely memorial seat which he and his wife had commissioned. May the sunflowers soar. I also heard that the adjacent mediaeval castle is now a visitor attraction and that the Canadian lady owner has now left this Country as non-dom tax rules change.

Newchurch looked changeless and at the church it was a ground floor ring so we had long ropes to control the 6 bells high up above us in the tower. An exhibition in the church told of different times. Being on the Marsh the people suffered much from marsh fever. However they also benefited from the smuggling trade. We had just remembered 80 years ago and the end of yet another war. In that Second World War the village had a Landing Ground from where Spitfires would take off and try 'tipping doodlebugs'.

On the 8th May 1945 all the church bells rang out. In the churches on our tour we could see that it had been arranged that ringers were to gather and ring the bells on the 8th May 2025. At our home tower of Cobham all our ringers made a point of coming up the tower and ringing as part of our own village VE Day Celebrations.

A lunchtime sandwich was enjoyed in New Romney which was the lead of the original five Cinque Ports founded by William the Conqueror. Our next church was just across the road.





St John's Meopham with St Mildred's Nurstead
Church Services July 2025

- Sunday 6th July 9.45am All Age Worship at St John's
 11.30am Holy Communion at St Mildred's
- Wednesday 9th July 10am Holy Communion at St John's Centre
- Sunday 13th July 9.45am Holy Communion at St John's
 11.30am Mattins at St Mildred's
- Wednesday 16th July 10am Holy Communion at St John's Centre
- Sunday 20th July 9.45am Morning Worship at St John's
 11.15am Churches Prayer Meeting at
 St John's Centre
- Wednesday 23rd July 10am Holy Communion at St John's Centre
- Sunday 27th July 9.45am Morning Worship & Thanksgiving at St John's
 Time to be confirmed
 Patronal Festivities at St Mildred's
- Wednesday 30th July NO 10am Holy Communion at St John's Centre

Cobham with Luddesdowne Church Services

July 2025



Sunday 6th July 10.30am Morning Worship & Baptism Cobham Church

Sunday 13th July 10.30am Holy Communion Luddesdowne Church.

Sunday 20th July 10.30am Holy Communion Cobham Church

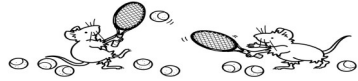
Sunday 27th July 10.30am Holy Communion Luddesdowne Church

Midweek Services in Sole Street.

2,9,16, 23, 30 July 930am Informal Morning Prayer

All services will take place in the St Mary's Church Room

It's that Wimbledon time of the year. *By Nigel Beeton*



The 'pop' of a ball on a racket
The voice of the Umpire so clear
There is nothing in quite the same
bracket
As that Wimbledon time of the
year!

'Fault!' cries the line judge, eyes
beady,
The ball boys and girls on their
toes;
For more of these matches we're
greedy:
The bug for this game grows and
grows!

The weather may shine, or be
raining
The temperature warm, mild or
chill;
Our appetites won't be restraining
For strawberries on Henman Hill.

The queues may be long, but en-
dure them
You'll get to the court – have no
fear
Just settle and watch, and be sure
then –
It's that Wimbledon time of the
year!

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LUDDESDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

7.30pm Monday 21st July

7.30pm Monday 15th September

7.30pm Monday 17th November

All Meetings will be taking place at Luddesdown Village Hall.

<http://www.luddesdown-pc.gov.uk/community/luddesdown-parish-council/>

COBHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS 2025

All meetings will start at 7.30pm

- 1st July 2025 - Meadow Room
- 9th September 2025 - St Mary's Church Room
- 7th October 2025 - Meadow Room
- 4th November 2025 - St Mary's Church Room
- 2nd December 2025 – Budget Meeting - Meadow Room

<http://www.cobham-kent-pc.gov.uk/>

<https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/>



Meopham Library Writing Group meets again on **Thursday 3rd July 2025 at 10am.**

July's writing theme is "Priest", which can be used as a starting point for a poem, short story or an article and there is also a writing challenge. Creative writing is a very enjoyable activity, which can help people who are facing challenging times or used to record special memories for the family.

If you are interested in writing, either as a beginner or a more experienced writer, you are warmly invited to join our small, friendly group. New members are always very welcome.

Future meetings will be on 7th August, 4th September and 2nd October. Please ring **01474 813379** for more information.

Thursday Fellowship.

We will be meeting on the 24th July at 2.00.p.m. In the St. John's Centre, Meopham.

Our Speaker is Ms Mell Moss. For 3 months this Spring she worked as a volunteer in the West Bank as an Ecumenical Accompanier. Her role has been monitoring human rights and reporting back to the United Nations. The title of Mel's talk is, '**An Eye Witness Update On the Holy Land.**' She is keen for her message to be shared with as many people as possible.

Please do come along and a lovely cup of tea will be awaiting you.

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FRENCH EXCHANGE OPPORTUNITY - a week in Paris in exchange for a week in Cobham and Luddesdown.

I have a family friend who has local ties, but now lives in Paris with her two children. She would love to set up an exchange trip with an English family or families. The children are a boy aged 15 and a girl aged 13. They have both studied English, but would like to improve their language skills and experience family life in England.

It would be for about a week and they would join in with whatever activities their hosts are doing. In return there would be the opportunity to stay with them in Paris and experience their hospitality in exchange- and practice some French language skills.

If you are interested please contact me and I can answer any questions and put you in touch with the family, to get to know them and arrange things from there.

Andrew Clarke (01474) 814238

(The Church/magazine does not have any connection or involvement in the organisation of this arrangement, please contact Andrew directly if you need further information).

THE TUESDAY **POP-IN**



Meetings are held at the Leather Bottle on the second Tuesday of the month from 10.30 till 12 noon; all are welcome to join us for a relaxed chat and coffee.

Next pop-in Tues 8th July.

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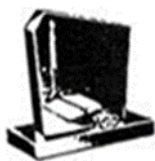
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GYG NIGHT WITH THE STARS AND AN APPEAL FOR YOUR SUPPORT

GYG stands for Gifted Young Generation and is a volunteer run youth Performing Arts Academy based in Gravesend and open to all.

We went with our teenage daughter to a special show called "A Night with the Stars", not knowing anything much about GYG and thanks to some free tickets we got through work. We were bowled over. It was not the visiting professionals from West End shows who took our breath away, but the GYG performers from here in Gravesham doing their thing with such professionalism. What shone through was their joy performing together, which was shared with the entranced audience and raised the roof of the Woodville Halls.

At the end there were some reflections by some of the current and former GYG performers, about how GYG had changed their lives. Some people came to GYG with challenges to overcome. They found warmth, encouragement and that vital "third space" that everyone needs growing up outside of home or work or school. Others spoke of being shy or awkward and that they never thought they could ever get up on stage - yet every one of them was a star performer that night and proof that with the encouragement and dedication of the fabulous volunteers coaching them, the shyest teenager can one day be making a speech in front of hundreds of people - or singing their heart out on stage. The older GYGs looked and spoke like young professionals and indeed they sang alongside real professionals, who had started out at GYG. Performers were in their teens - and some even younger "mini GYG's" who got some of the biggest applause.

There is a serious ending to this article. Although it's hard to believe, the funding stream for this vital institution for the young people of Gravesend runs out this year. So without some serious financial help to keep GYG afloat it could be the end. This would be too much of a disaster for all the children and families involved to even contemplate, but it's a real possibility unless the people of Gravesham fight for GYG - and support them financially. If you have not heard of GYG, please have a look at their website:

<https://www.wearegyg.co.uk/> Please also consider a donation.

GYG say on their website that any donation makes a difference and will help them in their mission of supporting the health, wellbeing and futures of young people in our area. So please also spread the word among your friends and to businesses for financial support and of course if you know a budding performer or a teenager looking for something to do- or would like to get involved as a volunteer- contact GYG today!

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Colour in the beach Mice.



To Note

*We didn't see the sign,
and although there were
many dogs on the beach,
dogs should not go on
there from May until the
end of September –
whoops sorry!*

As I now seem to have my travel sickness under control I have been on a couple of adventures in the car. Last week we went to the seaside and we walked along the promenade where we were overtaken by many cyclist and pram pushers.

I haven't been in the sea before so this time we ventured down to the beach, where I had seen other doggies running around, I put my paws in the moving water and was splashed. I then decided to have a little drink urghhhh it was horrible, it was a good job I had my fresh water bottle to take the taste way. I then found something crunchy to eat, but it was soon confiscated as it was a lump of old seaweed! Well I didn't know did I?

Anyway, we had a lovely day, the sun shone and a gentle breeze was just enough to keep us cool.

Love and licks Paddy

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If you ever struggle with doubt, take heart: so did one of the apostles, whose Feast Day is this month. St Thomas just could NOT believe that the Jesus he had seen crucified and dead on the cross could ever come back to life. But Thomas was an honest sceptic, because he really wanted to know the truth. Jesus could help such a man. And so He appeared to him and the other disciples. Instead of scolding him, Jesus simply showed him the wounds. Thomas's response was immediate: "My Lord and my God" (John 20.26ff). Ancient legends tell how Thomas went on to India as a missionary. There are rumours that Thomas even built a palace for a king's daughter in India, and thus he is the patron saint of architects. It is believed that he was martyred by a spear on 3rd July, 72 AD in Mylapore, near Madras. 46 ancient churches in England are dedicated to him.

Thomas Doubt Apostle Cross Dead Truth Sceptic Wounds Lord
 God Appeared India Patron Martyred Spear Mylapore Missionary
 Showed Saint madras

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