

# News & Views

**April 2025**



## **Elmers End Free Church**

**Goddard Road, Elmers End,  
Beckenham, Kent BR3 4AE**

**Website : [www.elmersendchurch.org.uk](http://www.elmersendchurch.org.uk)**

## **Minister**

We are without a Minister for the time being.

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## **Services**

The Sunday service is at 11.00 a.m.

Holy Communion is usually held in the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month.

**Elmers End Free Church is a member of Churches Together in Beckenham**

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## **Weekly Activities**

### **Brownie Guides**

Monday 6.30 p.m.

Leader : Miss Katherine Bayley

Email : 16thbeckenhambrownies@live.co.uk

### **Langley Pre-School**

Tuesday-Friday

Please contact Mrs Jenny Jupp

Tel : 020 8402 8320

Email : langleypreschool@hotmail.com

### **Flamenco**

Tuesday 7.30 p.m. Saturday 2.30 p.m.

Leader Mrs Juani Garcia

Email : flamenco@talktalk.net

## **Weddings, Funerals and Baptisms**

Please contact the Secretary on 07979 958753

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## **PHOTOS**

All photos this month are thanks to Anthony (page 20), Niels Rump (page 19), Unsplash (pages 1 & 17)

## SERVICES IN APRIL

- 6<sup>th</sup> 11.00 Morning Service led by Laura MacBean\*  
Organist : Peter Dowling
- 13<sup>th</sup> 11.00 Palm Sunday Service led by Marion Bayley  
Organist : Peter Dowling
- 17<sup>th</sup> 7.00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service at **Hayes Free Church**  
led by Rev Dr Elaine Colechin (see poster on page 16)
- 20<sup>th</sup> 11.00 Easter Sunday Service led by Rev. Bryn Thomas  
Including Holy Communion  
Organist : Stephen Davies  
The service will be followed by light refreshments
- 27<sup>th</sup> 11.00 Morning Service led by Joyce Brissett\*  
Organist : Stephen Davies

## SERVICES IN EARLY MAY

- 4<sup>th</sup> 11.00 Morning Service led by June Mackenzie\*  
Organist : Peter Dowling
- 11<sup>h</sup> 11.00 Morning Service led by Janet Godden\*  
Organist : Stephen Davies

\*Laura MacBean is from the Bromley Methodist Circuit

\*Joyce Brissett is from St. Paul's URC Croydon

\*June Mackenzie is from St. George's Beckenham

\*Janet Godden is from St. John's URC Orpington

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## MAY NEWS AND VIEWS

Any articles or news for the next edition should be with me by Easter Sunday April 20. They can be handed to me or Katherine.

Anthony



## **PASTORAL LETTER**

Now that David has retired (great for him but not so great for us!) we will greatly miss, among many other things, his excellent and thought-provoking pastoral letters. Instead, you will read letters from a variety of different people probably shorter and speaking personally not to the same high standard. Yes, I'm starting the ball rolling.

Last autumn I “celebrated” my 80th birthday and the Church were kind enough to give me a present, principally, of a cinema gift voucher. In February I made good use of it by going, escorted by Katherine, to see a filmed staged version of the music of Les Miserables, from the West End, to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the English version. Marion & I went to see it a couple of years into the run but Katherine was too young for some of it's rather adult themes. How time flies! We all went to see it several times over the years so this seemed an excellent use of my gift. It did not disappoint!

For those of you who don't know, it is based on a massive novel by Victor Hugo. I have a copy of it (in English) but have never yet managed to read it. I think I will stick to the film of which I also have a copy. It has a complicated plot but at it's heart is the story of a man (Jean Valjean) who stole a loaf of bread to save a starving child and as a result served 20 years hard labour in prison. Upon his release he stays temporarily with a bishop and steals some silver from him. When captured the bishop sees the good in him and says the silver was a gift. His life then changes and he does good things thereafter. One amazingly generous and far-seeing action by

the Bishop changed his life forever and through him a variety of other people. There's a strong lesson for us all here. Our actions can and will have results which we will probably never know.

One of the many other strands taking place during the show is a revolt of the people of Paris in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. They have a lot to revolt about and they sing the following determined for a better life and convinced it's on the way.

Do you hear the people sing?  
Singing a song of angry men?  
It is the music of a people  
Who will not be slaves again!  
When the beating of your heart  
Echoes the beating of the drums  
There is a life about to start  
When tomorrow comes!

Sadly it wasn't, but the stirring words and tune have been taken up by people with the same desires in our own time in such places as Turkey, Egypt, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka and Ukraine.

The show ends on a note of defiance : the rebels might be beaten this time, but more will follow. There's the promise of something better when "tomorrow comes"

Do you hear the people sing?  
Lost in the valley of the night  
It is the music of a people who are climbing to the light  
For the wretched of the earth  
There is a flame that never dies  
Even the darkest nights will end and the sun will rise

They will live again in freedom in the garden of the lord  
They will walk behind the ploughshare  
They will put away the sword  
The chain will be broken and all men will have their reward!

Will you join in our crusade?  
Who will be strong and stand with me?  
Somewhere beyond the barricade is there a world you long to see?  
Do you hear the people sing?  
Say, do you hear the distant drums?  
It is the future that they bring when tomorrow comes!

We also live in troubled times and it is our belief in God which keeps us going and even optimistic for the future.

Easter will soon be upon us. Jesus died for us and rose again on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day. I see echoes of Jesus in Jean Valjean. He virtually came back from the dead and was able to achieve a great deal of good and led many people in the right direction. I know there's no comparison but there are distinct echoes.

Thank you again for my cinema voucher which propelled me towards Les Misérables again after a gap which was too long. I hope you found this very brief introduction of some interest.

Happy Easter to you all

Anthony

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## WORDS OF WISDOM

(as distinct from the above!)

The plan each month has been to follow Luke's Gospel and his Acts of the Apostles and see how he deals with the great themes that we mark at Christmas, Good Friday, Easter and Pentecost. With extras to mark David Pickering's retirement, and Trinity, that takes six months.

Luke's insights were shown, as we have seen, by his emphasis on the aspect of Jesus' ministry that supported poor people. He showed that by featuring shepherds (even with angels bringing God's message *to them!*),

the manger, the Magnificat manifesto and Beatitudes that said not ‘poor in spirit’ (Matthew) but plain ‘poor’.

When we turn to the Passion story (chapters 22 and 23) Luke’s choices become even more striking. Here are some of them:

In Gethsemane the disciples go to sleep – odd, because you would think that adrenaline would take over and they would be extra vigilant. Mark shows Jesus getting impatient with them as they do so *three times*. Luke deletes almost all of that, as he does not want to show the disciples as uncaring, nor Jesus as angry with them. So he shows them asleep only once and lets them off with ‘because of their grief’.

That is Luke deleting something. He can also add an interesting episode as Pilate shares the problem of possible crucifixion with Herod Antipas, noting that after that ‘they became firm friends’.

All four gospels say that a slave’s ear was cut off by one of Jesus’ friends. (John says Peter did it and that the slave’s name was Malchus.) Only Dr Luke wonders to himself what Jesus *must* have done – and tells us that Jesus healed the injured ear – a wonderful detail.

Only Luke tells us what Jesus says as they nail him to the cross, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do’. Then only Luke relates that an argument occurred between the two thieves crucified each side of Jesus, with the penitent one asserting that, while *they* deserved their punishment, Jesus had done nothing to merit being crucified. Jesus’ response was, ‘Today you will be with me in Paradise’. Only Luke...

The most starkly different point is that, while Mark gave Jesus’ last words as ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me’, Luke substitutes, ‘Into your hands I commit my spirit’. Luke just cannot believe that Jesus would have felt abandoned, so he deletes the text of Mark that he has in front of him and offers serene, confident words. A detail follows: Luke worked out that a Roman officer was unlikely to use the phrase ‘Truly, this man was the Son of God’, so he changes it to, ‘This man was innocent’.

What do we make of these differences? Enlightening, I hope. Luke is a profound thinker in his own right, as well as a convinced and faithful follower of Jesus: he doesn't just pass on as facts information he has researched about happenings of 50-60 years before, but reflects on them in the light of *his experience of Jesus in his own life*.

So we too can reflect on our experience of Jesus: that process is an aspect of what we mean by the work of the Holy Spirit. We will come up with something that is broadly in line with what the Bible says, but, for each one of us, it will be subtly different.

Further, however we understood the 'inspired Word of God' in the past, we can now see that the Holy Spirit acts *through* Luke and the three others to produce accounts that give authentically their knowledge of their Lord, each being slightly – but significantly – different from each other, all them being wonderful windows into the life of Jesus himself. Read Luke 22 and 23 and don't be surprised if your eyes moisten up.

*Bryn*

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## A REQUEST

(Sylvia beat me to it, but I was sorely tempted to delete parts of Para. 2)

If you would like to write something to go into N&V's. it would be most appreciated. It could be a rhyme, quiz, poem, if you have read something interesting you would like to share. A memory, it does not have to be long, a short passage.

Anthony, our wonderful Editor, would be delighted to hear from you. If your offer is one among many, then we may all be enriched in the coming editions.

Thank you.

Sylvia



# **NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY & PRAYER POINTERS**

## **Our Church Prayer List**

Please pray for healing and hope for those experiencing joys or heartaches in life's rich journey, including those who are feeling housebound, in hospital or receiving care, remembering particularly

- Marion
- Jack (now home), together with Pat and their family
- Jeanette
- Anne
- Anne's friend Mary whose husband died recently
- Anne's two Ukrainian guests, Oksana and Anastasia, who have heard that their brother-in-law / uncle has been killed in the war in Ukraine.
- Nick's cousin Angela whose husband Alan has just died.
- Andy and his mother & stepfather

## **Internationally**

Continue to remember nations and people afflicted by war and violence, including the people of Ukraine, Israel, Gaza and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and Lebanon, praying that the current on/off peace negotiations may bring peace and vital justice for each nation or community.

Remember too the peoples of Myanmar (previously Burma) and neighbouring countries who have suffered from a major earthquake.

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## **THIS MONTH'S QUESTION**

Which first in retailing history took place in a branch of Marsh's Supermarket in Troy, Ohio on 26 June 1974?

Answer on Page 15

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## WHERE IS THIS?

Last month there was no room for a ‘Where is this’ photo, but where are we this month? Possibly not too difficult?

Anthony

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## MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES

The Elders have decided that our charity for this year will be Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) or Doctors without Borders. I thought it would be helpful if you knew something of the origins of this organisation before learning more about their activities in future editions.

In May 1968, you may remember, that there were major riots in Paris, and at the same time, news emerged of the fighting in Nigeria where Biafra was trying to obtain self-rule. As a result, there was a massive famine and pictures of starving, wounded and dying people including many children soon featured on the world’s TV’s, perhaps for the first time.

The French Red Cross appealed for volunteers and after a short while a group of 6 doctors and nurses went to Biafra where they were duly shocked by what they found, working in hospitals which were attacked by Nigerian forces. They openly criticised the Nigerian government and the International Red Cross for seemingly complicit behaviour. Over the following 3 years other doctors began to speak out and began to lay the foundations for a new and questioning form of humanitarianism that would ignore political or religious boundaries and prioritise the welfare of those suffering.

In 1971 2 medical journalists issued an appeal to establish a band of doctors to help people suffering in the midst and wake of major disasters. The doctors from Biafra jumped at the chance as they had been working on trying to organise something similar.

As they said, “We wanted to ensure sufficient knowledge of this new type of medicine : war surgery, triage medicine, public health, education etc. It’s simple really : go where the patients are. It seems obvious, but at the time it was a revolutionary concept because borders got in the way. It’s no coincidence that we called it ‘Medecins sans Frontieres.’”

## SONGS OF PRAISE SERVICE

On Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, Katherine led a Songs of Praise Service, with a difference. Katherine asked for not only hymns but readings, prayers and poems. It was the perfect mix with a quiz in the middle of it.

We had old favourite hymns, Dear Lord and Father of Mankind, chosen by Anthony. Dave and Anne both chose Amazing Grace, a firm favourite. Katherine's choice was a newer one, In Christ Alone. More special hymns, Praise my soul, which we had at our wedding. Elizabeth's choice was, Be Still for the Presence of the Lord, and Nick chose Tell me the stories of Jesus while Pat chose, Father I place into your hands and Young Elizabeth chose To God be the glory.

For their poem choice Anne and Elizabeth had Footprints in the sand. Young Elizabeth chose an unusual poem, Dream of the Rood, which I had not heard before, though you may have. There were many more.

For prayers, Nick chose the Civil war prayer, very apt for the world today. Anthony's choice was the Ravensbrück prayer, while Dave chose the Elmers End prayer. There were a very eclectic mix of prayers.

Readings were also varied from Marion's Ephesians 4: 4-9 and Nick's John 9:25. Elizabeth read them beautifully.

We closed the Service with Young Elizabeth and Marion's choice, Numbers 6: 24-26.

We would like to give a huge thank you to Katherine for all her time and effort for a wonderful service.

Sylvia

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How is it that we put men on the moon before we thought it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?

Grief is hard.  
Death can impact  
all of life.

The Bereavement  
*Journey*  
a place to talk

7 Sessions of films  
and discussion  
**for *anyone* bereaved *anytime***

**The Bereavement Journey**  
**Christ Church Beckenham, Main Hall,**  
**Fairfield Road, Beckenham BR3 3LE**

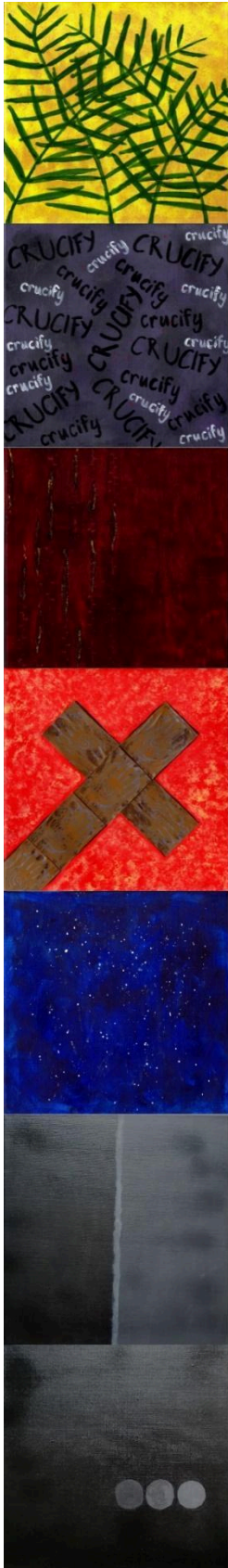
**Mondays 2pm - 4pm:**  
2<sup>nd</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> June, 7<sup>th</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> July.

**Please contact Helen on:**  
020 8650 3847 / [office@ccb.org.uk](mailto:office@ccb.org.uk)  
or scan the QR code for information and booking.

 **CHRIST CHURCH  
BECKENHAM**







# HOLY WEEK 2025

## Stations of the Cross

13 - 20 April 2025

Daily Pauses for Thought  
accompanying Jesus  
to the cross and the grave  
reflecting on what that journey  
means for the world

Reflections available on the  
Bromley URC YouTube channel  
([www.youtube.com/@bromleyurc](http://www.youtube.com/@bromleyurc))  
and in booklet form



## FOODBANK

Our most needed items are:

Small Tea Bags  
Cereals  
Squash  
Fruit Juice  
Sweets  
Washing up Liquid  
Toothbrushes  
Toothpaste

As usual, please don't feel under any obligation to give in any way, but this is simply a little guidance for any of you who would like to give at the moment.

Our warehouse is running low of donations which restricts how much can be given to those in need.

**MANY THANKS** once again for all your help - we really couldn't manage without your donations.

Thank you.

Sylvia

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## A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

A local lady, Amy , is hiring our Langley Rd hall for a fund raising Quiz Evening for Breast Cancer Awareness on Friday 16th May. We are considering putting an EEFC team together to help Amy with her fund raising. Tickets will be £6 per person. If you're interested in joining the EEFC team please contact Anne. More details can be found at this website. <https://buytickets.at/personal145/1565528>

Thanks

Anne

## **MAUNDY THURSDAY**

On **Maundy Thursday at 7pm** it would be great if some EEFC folk could come to the Communion Service at Hayes Free Church in Pickhurst Lane. It IS the original communion service... Hayes is also in vacancy. Elaine Colechin (Minister at Bromley URC) will preside and I shall be at the organ (that I played for 20 years between 1970s and 1990s). Hayes is a United Reformed Church, named 'Free' in a scheme that located nonconformist churches in the suburbs from the 1930s, like EEFC. It always had Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, some Anglicans and a Catholic among its basically Congregationalist fellowship !

Bryn

See the poster on Page 16

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## **BIRTHDAYS**

We would like to wish the following a Happy Birthday in April

Dave  
Andy  
Tendai  
David  
Barbara

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## **ANSWER TO THIS MONTH'S QUESTION**

Use of a barcode scanner

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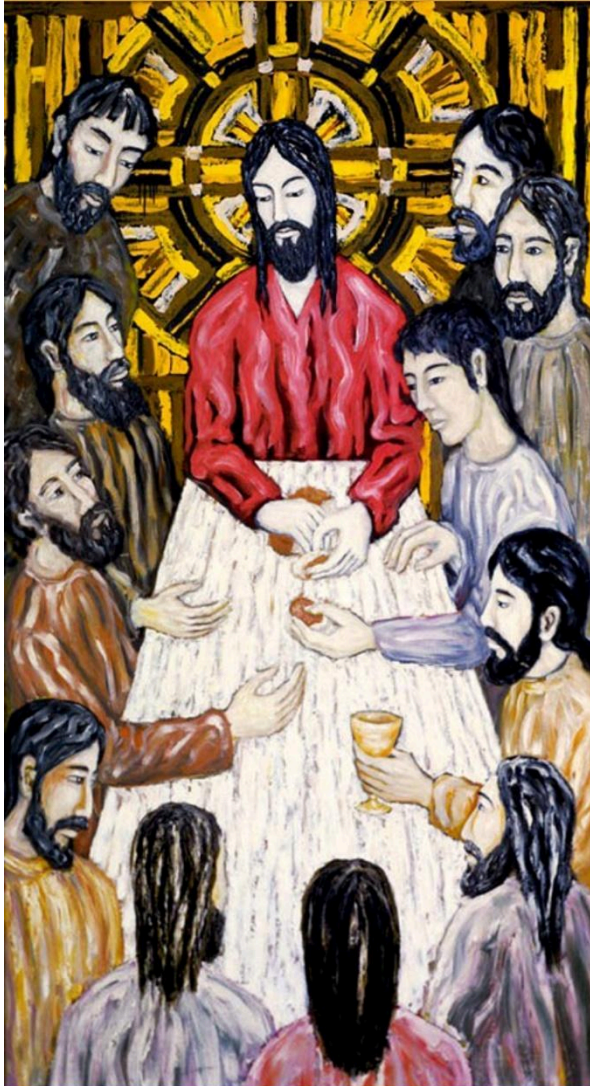
## **DESERT ISLAND DISCS**

**Please see the notice of this event on page 17**

You will see that the event includes a raffle. Please start working out what you can offer as a prize.

# MAUNDY THURSDAY

*Were you there, when Jesus broke the bread?*



## A SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

**Thursday 17th April 2025**

**7pm**

**Hayes Free Church**

Pickhurst Lane, BR2 7HU

**All are welcome**

This is a joint service between  
Emmanuel URC, West Wickham,  
Elmers End Free Church,  
Hayes Free Church and  
Bromley URC

Led by: Revd Dr Elaine Colechin



The  
United  
Reformed  
Church



# **DESERT ISLAND DISCS**

**Saturday May 10th 2025**

**6pm at Elmers End Free Church**

**(entry via Langley Road entrance)**

**Castaway is Rev. Dr. Elaine Colechin**

**Interviewed by Rev. Bryn Thomas**

**Will Elaine's desert island look like this?**

**Or perhaps not?**



**Why not come along and find out.**

**Admission £10 including a fish & chip supper**

**Bring your own drinks and there is a raffle.**

**All proceeds are for our 2025 charity Medecins sans Frontieres**

**For tickets contact Anthony Bayley by 4 May**

# ORIGINS OF WELL KNOWN EXPRESSIONS

## TO BONE UP ON A SUBJECT

The lives of school pupils in Victorian times were made much easier when publisher Henry Bohn (1796 – 1884) produced English translations of Latin & Greek classics. They were widely used by students to revise before exams and this quickly became known as “to bohn up” on a subject

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## RAMBLINGS: NATURE NOTES FROM GOD’S CREATION (a monthly reflection, interweaving nature and faith)

### MEETING TAWNY OWL

*(Our final edition of this series due to us not having a separate January edition)*

Through my ministry I’ve met a number of Brown or Tawny Owls, two names for the same species of owl, though up to last month they were all leaders of various Girl Guide Groups! But last month, knowing my love of all things nature related, I was kindly invited by the 8<sup>th</sup> West Wickham Beavers to an educational evening with owls from JAMBS, based at Hall Place and Gardens in Bexley (<https://www.hallplace.org.uk/all-about-owls/>). JAMBS had brought along a number of owls to display, including this beautiful Tawny Owl which sat on my leather glove-protected hand. I was entranced!

There are five resident species of owl in Britain - the Tawny owl, Barn owl, Short-eared owl, Long-eared owl and Little owl, with the Eurasian Eagle-Owl making a recent comeback in Yorkshire. Other non-resident owls are occasionally seen, including the Snowy Owl, which I’ve had the ‘wow’ of spotting three times in Scotland.

The Tawny Owl is the most common British owl, numbering over 50,000 pairs. It is this owl's characteristic 'Twit-Twoo' that may be heard locally near woods at night, particularly during the Autumn when owls pair ahead of Spring mating. This call is actually a love-locating duet! The initial and sharper 'Ke-wick' (twit) is made by a female with the more haunting 'hoo-hoo' sound the response from a male.

Within the Bible, owls are shown in negative contexts, being classed as 'unclean', and thus forbidden to be eaten (good news for owls!), or as inhabitants

of desolate places often associated with misfortune. In other literature the nocturnal habit of owls has led to their association with nefarious activities, inducing a superstitious fear. More positively owls have an association with wisdom, seen from ancient Greek tales to Winnie the Pooh, doubtless stemming from their ability to navigate the night!

My early encounters with tawny owls were on a paper round that I had in a leafy part of Shortlands in my teenage years. In the dark winter months I'd encounter a tawny owl as day was breaking, their presence revealed by the raucous mobbing by smaller birds, including alarmed blackbirds, feeling threatened by its appearance in their patch. Typically, the owl ignored such harassment, but sometimes it gave up, and flew silently off, seeking a quieter roost for the day. That for me is wisdom for human life!

I am grateful to the 8<sup>th</sup>'s Beavers and hope that the visit of JAMBS may so pique the curiosity of the youngsters, that they may grow up valuing the wonder of nature. David

Photo with thanks to Niels Rump, 8<sup>th</sup> West Wickham Group Scout Leader.





## **GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE (IN 2011)**



**WHERE IS THIS?**

