

Très près de France

time out

Where?

Deal is on the Kent coast a few miles north of Dover. It is near enough to Pas-de-Calais to have been shelled during the Second World War. The French coast can sometimes be seen during the day, and the street lighting in Dunkirk is visible on most nights.

Why?

History, mostly: Julius Caesar landed on the shingle or thereabouts in 55 or 54 BC. From the 13th to the 19th century, Deal was an important port, and naval ships would anchor offshore in the Downs, a stretch of water sheltered by the treacherous Goodwin Sands. Lady Hamilton lodged at the Royal Hotel while she waited for Lord Nelson to return from sea.

What to see?

Three castles: Deal, Walmer, and nearby Sandown, built by Henry VIII to protect the coast from French and Spanish incursions. Only a few stones remain of Sandown, but Deal and Walmer Castles are still largely intact and open to visitors. Walmer Castle is the home of the Warden of the Cinque Ports, and was frequently visited by former wardens Pitt the Younger and the Duke of Wellington.

The former Royal Marines North Barracks is the site of the memorial garden to the 11 Royal Marine musicians killed by an IRA bomb in 1989, and near the lifeboat station is the memorial bandstand. Deal Maritime and Local History Museum brings alive the area's seafaring tradition. You can, of course, just soak up the atmosphere on the largely Georgian sea front.

Eating and drinking

Jasin's Restaurant, at the end of Deal pier, has stunning views out over the Deal, Dover, Sandwich, and Kent coast. The 18th-century King's Head, in Beach Street, offers pub grub and a collection of cricketing memorabilia. For picnics, there are plenty of sandwich bars and an Italian deli. Or, in time-honoured fashion, sit on the shingle with fish and chips.

Worth a look

The 12th-century St Leonard's, in upper Deal, was for centuries the town's only church. The town-centre civic church, St George's, was originally built as a chapel-of-ease.

High point

The four-storey Timeball Tower was constructed in 1820 as a semaphore station. From 1853, it housed the Time Ball, which provided an accurate time signal at 1 p.m. every day to the Masters of ships anchored in the Downs. At 12.55 p.m., the ball was raised to the halfway position to warn observers that the signal was imminent. At 12.57, the ball was raised to its highest position, and at 1 p.m. precisely, an electrical impulse, sent from Greenwich Observatory, released the ball. At the instant of its drop, the ships' Masters corrected their timepieces.

The ball was last operated on 25 February 1927. The tower is open to visitors from Easter to the end of September at weekends and on Bank Holidays.

Margaret Holness

Robert Mackley



diary

Tastefully C of E

I WRITE this on the feast of St Wilfrid, whom *Celebrating the Saints* rather dourly refers to as someone whose "manner and methods were not such as to draw people close to him at a personal level". Not only that, but he marched round introducing the Roman rite all over the place, and went abroad to get ordained.

I can think of no one better suited, therefore, to be patron of a group of Anglo-Catholics.

If you are wondering what I'm on about, you must have missed the ecclesiastical sensation of the decade that is SWiSH: the Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda (there should be an extra "s", and the "i" is a bit gratuitous, I know, but a chap has to have his fun, and the C of E has to have her acronyms).

This is the organisation that I have been waiting to join. I don't know much about it (nor does anyone else, it seems, least of all its founders), but it strikes me as a splendid thing. The St Hilda bit, I assume, is to indicate that traditionalist female Anglo-Catholic priests can join, too; and the choice of two truculent saints with slightly old-fashioned names fits in entirely with my model of ministry.

A well-fitting cassock does indeed make a nice swishing noise, as does a silk chasuble on a cotton alb; so there can be few better acronyms: if the C of E is in turmoil, we can at least be so in good taste. It has grounded bishops rather than those funny aerial ones, apparently, and a lovely calming green website. But the thing

that means that it must be of God? *The Daily Telegraph's* Damian Thompson does not like it.

Not a good day

WE DO not know what the successor of St Peter makes of it either, given that it emerged after his visit to these shores. The highlight of the Holy Father's visit was, of course, his sharing in evening prayer (albeit in a form somewhat resembling a canine *petit déjeuner*) with Dr Williams. Their embrace at the Peace, their shared prayer at the Shrine of the Confessor, and the unscripted kissing of the altar were all moving and humbling.

Also moving and humbling was the Dean's marvellously forgetting the name of one of the martyrs on the Abbey's west front, as he pointed them out to the Pope, and the Archbishop's whispering what looked like a dirty joke in the ear of the Minor Canon and Succentor as they made their way out.

Less moving and humbling — and not, therefore, the highlight of the visit — was choosing the day of Blessed John Henry Newman's secession from the Catholic Church of this land as his feast day rather than the day of his death, in August. The argument that people are away on holiday in August is hardly convincing: Our Lady seems to be able to mark her Assumption in that month without too much pain, and, for the southern hemisphere, it is no holiday time at all.

As the young people of my university are wont to say: bad times.

Danish surprise

I DISCOVERED the other day that — courtesy of Porvoo — we have entered into full communion with the Danish Lutheran Church. Now, you have to be careful here, because,

Restored shrines

out of the question

Write, if you have any answers to the questions listed at the end of this section, or would like to add to the answers below.

Your answers

In several English cathedrals there used to be a shrine of a saint, containing a relic. Some have been rebuilt, copied, or left as a space for prayer. . . In each destroyed shrine, there remains material, even if only the flooring, that once touched the relics. Can this be justifiably regarded as a secondary relic? May we regard a reconstruction or replica as a true shrine, and hope for miracles?

Hereford Cathedral is one of a handful of English cathedrals where substantial parts of the saint's shrine have survived, and, in recent years, these remains have, in several cases, been restored and developed. I can think of only two major shrines where the saint's body remains — Westminster Abbey and Durham Cathedral — but others, such as Hereford, St Albans, and Chichester, do possess small relics that have been returned to their original resting place.

In "restoring" medieval shrines, we are not, I think, aiming to recreate a "pre-Reformation cult". It is true that these shrines were powerful focuses of prayer and healing: in Hereford alone, at the shrine of St Thomas of Hereford, between 1287

and 1307, some 470 miracles are recorded (second only to Canterbury's Thomas, where more than 660 are recorded). Many of these healing miracles were dramatic and immediate. But today, restored shrines are there, I think, to provide a focus for prayer, intercession, and healing in the broadest sense. We have certainly not restored them with the intention of "hoping for miracles".

While some might regard such an interpretation of medieval practice as rather un-Anglican, there is little doubt that these shrines are places where the boundaries between heaven and earth are extremely thin. Visitors and pilgrims feel this powerfully, and our shrine's intercession board is nearly always full of the most moving prayers — and, yes, the same people might well testify to healing that they have experienced at these places.

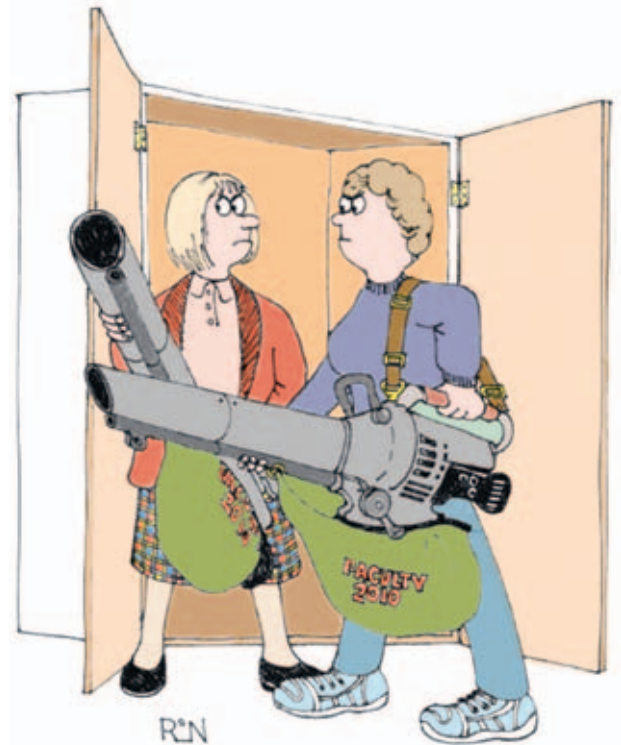
(*The Very Revd*) Michael Taviner
Dean of Hereford

Your questions

My great-grandparents were married in a church in Bridgewater on 25 April 1882. The banns were called only once in my great-grandfather's church, Holy Trinity, Barnstaple, on 9 April. Why might this be? C. W.

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St Gargoyles



Shifting the cobwebs in the north aisle required a faculty

like "mission", "ecumenism" is one of those things that it is a grave sin to be against, and, in the modern church, asking even the most innocent question gets the mission-shaped fanatics and ecumaniacs quivering with righteous indignation.

Call me a bluff traditionalist, but I thought you had to preserve the historic episcopal succession to be in the Premier League that is Porvoo; otherwise, you get put in the Championship Division of Meissen — don't you? But not now, it seems. Those lovely white ruffs around the neck and the prospect of endless supplies of bacon have caused us to fudge gracefully over that omission. We national Churches must stick together, one assumes.

Faith for nothing

BEING a national Church does have its moments, though. A friend recounts visiting a family who wanted their child baptised, and, after duly explaining the nature of baptism and all those things one fears go in one ear and out the other, he asked them if they had any questions. "Yes," said the father. "How much does it cost?"

"Nothing," my friend replied. "The gift of faith is free."

"There, I told you," said the mother. "I told you it was on the NHS."

The Revd Robert Mackley is a research student at the University of Cambridge

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