

## ST CLEMENT'S CHURCHYARD REDISCOVERED

Despite the unseasonably warm weather, Mother Nature has clearly decided that it is autumn with winter just around the corner. This does not mean that there is nothing to see. If you follow the paths around St Clement's, for instance, there are wonderful shows of cyclamen snuggled beneath the Lime trees in the north churchyard and beneath the Cherry trees in the south. Sadly, the warmer weather has had a damaging effect on our remaining bee colony. October means that the number of bees drops dramatically as the queen stops laying and the colony prepares for the cold winter months. Unfortunately, this year it has coincided with wasps actively seeking honey so they identify smaller colonies and attack and rob their hives. I fear that St Clement's bees have been victims of such attacks. Thanks to the generosity of Sandwich Rotary and two of our volunteers, we have invested in two new colonies for next spring so our apiary will be up and running again by then.

The changes are clearly identifiable in the churchyard and the volunteers have begun their own activities in respect of our autumn and winter works. In recent weeks we have given the Millenium Yew its annual trim and painted the Gardener's Hut Forest Green both to help it blend in with its corner of the churchyard as well as to protect it from the forthcoming winter. We have also been working on the bee garden itself by trimming the Lavender horseshoe and replacing some of the plants that have not survived as well as weeding the flower beds and planting new ground cover plants. Later this month our friends from Sandwich Rotary intend to plant several thousand Crocus bulbs in and around the St Clements Apiary. In the coming months, weather permitting, we are planning to create a small wildflower bed behind the beehives using the railway sleepers donated by Katharine and extend the spring bulb meadow in the north churchyard by planting the several hundred bulbs donated by members of the congregation. If anyone is interested in volunteering to help develop and maintain our beautiful churchyard and encourage others to see it as a place of contemplation and reflection please do not hesitate to be in touch with me.

Finally, our last summer harvest from St Clement's bees has brought us 28 jars of honey which will be available in the days ahead. As with previous batches, we suggest a £5 donation for each 8oz jar, which goes into the churchyard fund.

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