

THE BART GROUP

BIRLING  
ADDINGTON  
RYARSH  
TROTTSCLIFFE



BENEFICE PROFILE



## Welcome to BART

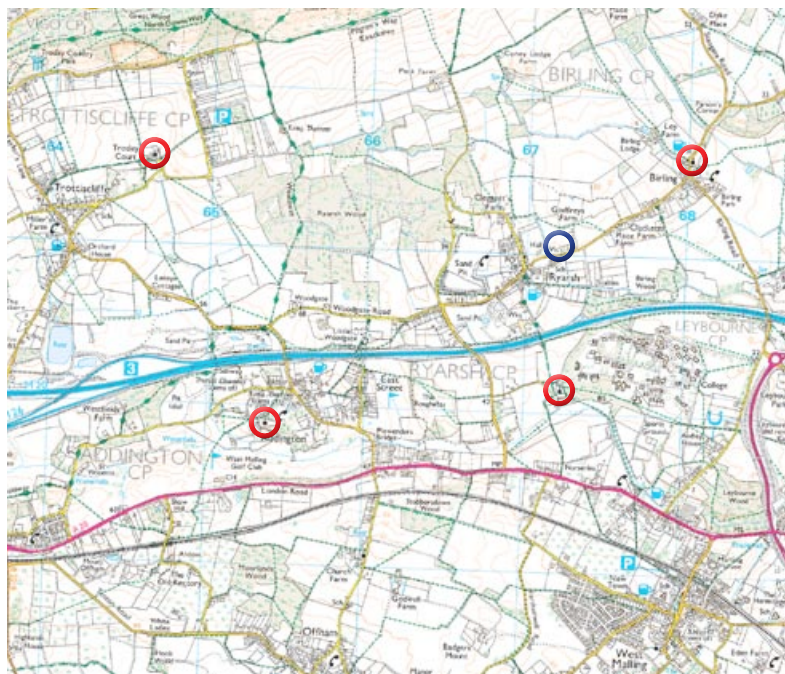
The BART parishes of Birling, Addington, Ryarsh and Trottscliffe regard themselves as four separate entities, four parishes, but one happily united benefice.

There is so much to celebrate in the BART parishes!

Gathering the information to write the Benefice Profile has proved to be a most exciting and rewarding challenge!

The Profile will tell you where we are, what we do, what we believe and how we worship – we hope that it will help you to find out a great deal about the 2000 people of the BART parishes! There is so much going on!





### Where we are

Nestling beneath the North Downs, the BART parishes, which became a joint benefice in 1977, are some 50 minutes from London by main line rail, 15 minutes from the M25 and M2, and 5 minutes from the M20 and M26. The BART parishes are close to the historic market town of West Malling which has a medical centre, two opticians, a veterinary practice, library, post office, bank, building society, small shops, numerous restaurants and a Tesco store. For more serious retail therapy Maidstone (7 miles), Tonbridge (11 miles), Tunbridge Wells (14 miles), Sevenoaks (11 miles) and Bluewater (16 miles) provide considerable choice.



### The Vicarage

The 1970's vicarage, situated in the village of Ryarsh, comprises a lounge, dining room, kitchen, downstairs cloakroom, four bedrooms (3 double, 1 single), a family bathroom and a separate shower room. It has central heating, double glazing and a single garage. In addition there is a study which can be accessed without entering the family home. The vicarage, which is not overlooked, has a large, secluded rear garden with a stunning perspective.

### Local Schools

There are two primary schools within the curtilage of the BART parishes: one, a CE school in Trottscliffe, (3 miles) and the other a county primary school which is opposite the vicarage in Ryarsh. There are also other local primary schools : a CP School at Offham, (2 miles), and CE schools in Platt (3 miles) and Leybourne (2 miles). Kent still operates the 11+ system of secondary selection. Children of secondary age can attend one of the four grammar schools in Maidstone (7 miles), one of the two CE secondary comprehensive schools; the Bennett Memorial School in Tunbridge Wells (14 miles) or St. George's School, Gravesend (10 miles), or one of the four high schools; The Malling School (3 miles), Aylesford School Sports College (4 miles), Wrotham School (4 miles) or Holmesdale Technology College (3 miles). There are also a number of private and independent schools in the area. The distance measurements are from the vicarage. There are good bus services to enable children to access all these schools.



### Village Activities

The BART villages have many clubs and organisations –NADFAS (BART), U3A (BART), Garden Societies (BART) and W.I., (Ryarsh); a book club (Addington), a youth club (Ryarsh), sports clubs: petanque (Ryarsh), short mat bowls (Ryarsh), cricket (Addington and Ryarsh), football (Addington and Ryarsh), golf (Addington) and tennis (Trottiscliffe) - which attract members from way beyond the four parishes.



### The Churches

The four churches have different styles of worship and offer a wide variety of services. Joint BART services include the weekly 8.00am communion services, the quarterly Family Communion Services, the Tenebrae Supper and the Good Friday vigil. Joint BART activities include the monthly Women's Fellowship and Crafty Ladies, the BART choir practices and the quarterly Men's Breakfast. The parish magazine – 'Pilgrims' - is delivered free to every household.

During 2009, there were 7 baptisms, 8 weddings, 22 funerals, 2 burials and 4 interments of ashes throughout the four parishes. Currently, there is no parish office or administrative support for the incumbent.

### Finances

Each parish maintains its own finances, but also makes a monthly contribution to the BART Fund, which is a conduit for the payment to the Diocese for the incumbent's stipend, national insurance and pension contribution. The Fund also pays the vicarage council tax and water and sewage charges together with smaller items such as expenses to visiting clergy. Each parish's share is determined by a formula from the Diocese. The Fund is managed on the basis that there is sufficient cash in the bank account to cover any difficulty a parish may have with a month's contribution. The Fund has its own independent treasurer. The accounts are audited annually.

## The United Benefice

**All Saints Birling, St. Margaret Addington, St. Martin Ryarsh and St Peter & St Paul Trottiscliffe**

We are looking for an energetic and enthusiastic man or woman, who, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will work with the people of each of the four parishes to take the relevance and importance of the gospel to the wider community.

**We hope that he or she:**

- will proclaim the gospel of Christ, leading a prayerful ministry that is open to the Holy Spirit's leading
- will promote the study of the bible; teaching, proclaiming and interpreting its message in the light of twenty-first century culture and needs
- will share the vision of the BART parishes into mission, outreach and further growth
- will respect the different styles of worship of the four churches
- will actively look for and nurture gifts amongst the people of God, training and entrusting such people with Christian responsibilities
- will work with the established lay leadership team
- will combine an open and flexible approach to ministry and worship with a willingness to initiate and adopt new approaches
- will work with compassion and understanding with both the established youth groups, and the older members of the congregations
- will prioritise regular pastoral visiting and become involved with village life beyond the church family
- will be able to do all of the above and still maintain a sense of humour!

The new incumbent would be supported by four lay readers, seven churchwardens and a large number of youth leaders and teachers. The incumbent holds separate regular meetings with the lay team and the wardens.





## Birling - All Saints

### The Village

Birling is a small village with 333 people on the Electoral Register. The village comprises a mixture of commuters, farm workers and employees of small businesses, etc. There is a mixture of old and new housing, with no large developments. The village is surrounded by farmland with views of the North Downs.

There is a small but attractive village hall adjacent to the church in the village centre which has a large car park, and a welcoming village pub – the Nevill Bull. There are no shops.

Although there is no school many village children attend Ryarsh Primary School just half a mile away. The Children's House Montessori pre-school has been running in the village hall since 1998.

Birling has a very active village community which organises events and fund raising such as: regular concerts, the Birling Follies (fun and entertainment for all ages), candle-lit and themed suppers, quiz evenings, occasional garden safaris and wine society events, and the flower festival, which has been held annually over the three-day May bank holiday for the past 29 years, which attracts hundreds of visitors from far and wide.



### The Church

A church is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1087. The church was also central to the struggles of both King Henry VI and King Henry VIII. Birling church has a long history connected to the Nevill family who live locally and are still very active in the church to-day. In 1866, both the organ and the church clock were donated to the church by the fourth Earl of Abergavenny.

Birling has the largest church within the BART parishes with a seating capacity of 160. It is spacious enough to hold BART celebration services, concerts and fund raising occasions. There is a team of 8 bellringers who have been ringing a welcome before most morning services since 1987. There are 19 people on the Church Electoral Roll.

### Worship and Ministry

Our monthly worship consists of an 8.00am 1662 Holy Communion Service, a 9.30am 1662 Morning Prayer Service and a Family Service on the second Sunday of each month led by a lay reader or member of the church family. On Remembrance Sunday there is a large service incorporating The Nevill Lodge of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes. At Christmas there is a Candlelit Carol Service.

Birling holds services at all festival times and is seeking ways of expanding its worship. The church is keen to attract more families with a desire to keep the more traditional services in place. Attendances are small in number, but are faithful at the various services. Numbers have been gradually rising over the past three years.

### Youth Work

There is no Sunday School, but the young people are encouraged to attend the shared ministry youth work at Ryarsh, where the leaders are from both Birling and Ryarsh.





## Addington - St. Margaret

### The Village

Addington is a small, relatively affluent community spread into three separate areas, divided by a golf course. Set in the Green Belt and an area of outstanding natural beauty, the church, village green and pub are also in a conservation area. There are nearly three hundred homes, with 626 on the Electoral Register, and relatively large commuter and retired contingents.

We have a strong Cricket club, which uses the recreation ground, and a Village Hall also on the recreation ground. The village playgroup also uses the Village Hall. There is a pub, "The Angel", and a farm shop on the London Road. Village website [www.addington-parish.org.uk](http://www.addington-parish.org.uk)

### The Church

St. Margaret's is a 21st century church in an 11th century Norman building, which seats about 100 in the nave. The church fabric is in good order. There are 62 people on the Church Electoral Roll and 34 of these come from outside of the village. Average attendance at Open House services is 50 to 60.

We are financially sound with a healthy reserve and give a minimum 10% of our income to Christian charities. The majority of our income is from direct giving.

After many years of frustration, the construction of our new extension should start in September 2010. When complete it will provide more flexibility during and after services, a place for the youth groups to meet and a venue for social gatherings and meetings. The rooms will be attached but independent from the nave and have a sound link, small kitchenette and a disabled toilet. We will also take the opportunity to upgrade the heating in the nave. The works are fully funded, mainly by donations from the church family.

### Worship and Ministry

We see faith as a journey. We read the Bible seriously in the light of present day culture, and try to follow Jesus' teaching in how we live our lives. We try to face up to the intellectual dilemmas facing thinking Christians today and to relate our faith and worship to the world in which we live and work. We encourage our members to have a personal and saving relationship with Jesus.

As in most village churches there is a broad range of theological views among the congregation, and we welcome people from all traditions, however the dominant tradition at St Margaret's is broad evangelical with charismatic flavour.

A rural church has to serve the whole village and our service pattern follows this principle. We have a weekly Open House Service which once a month includes communion. These services are informal and with the exception of the communion service are led by members of the lay team. We also have two prayer book services a month which are attended by a small but faithful congregation, and a Service of Remembrance.

Music and its role in worship is a particular strength of our Church. The Open House services are lead by our music group of gifted musicians and include keyboards, guitars, wind and drums. New songs are introduced on a regular basis. The recent re-ordering of the church has included a modern music system and has opened up the Chancel and both chapels. The church organ is used at traditional services. There is no choir.



We have an amateur dramatic society, 'Hedgehog Productions', which performs musicals with a Christian message.

Other activities include a regular men's curry night which is treated as outreach, and a book club.



### Youth Work

We have a long tradition of youth work in Addington and have a core group of around 20 youngsters aged 11-18 called “Oggies” who meet at the home of one of our youth leaders on Friday nights. They lead the Mothering Sunday Service; attend summer camps and the ‘Big Church Day Out’. The youth band ‘Strobe’ meets regularly for jamming sessions and occasionally takes part in services.

We also run a fortnightly Mother and Toddlers group “Tiddlers” which is treated as an outreach to mothers, carers and children.

### Ourselves

We believe our strengths include:

- A strong lay leadership team
- An inclusive, welcoming and friendly congregation
- Richness and quality of worship
- A strong youth group
- A strong financial position
- The ability to laugh at ourselves

We have many weaknesses including:

- A lack of organised outreach
- Fewer house groups and bible studies than in the past
- A very busy “few”

We see opportunities for the future as:

- Outreach to the village.
- Outreach to families with young children
- Development and support of house groups and bible studies
- The development of members into active and eventually, leadership roles
- More to help the few.

We are challenged by:

- Apathy and fatigue
- Other secular choices on Sundays

The church has its own website presence at:

[www.achurchnearyou.com/addington-st-margaret/](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/addington-st-margaret/)

and can also be found on facebook.





## Ryarsh - St. Martin

### The Village

Ryarsh is a small rural community with a primary school, a village hall and a small independent Baptist Church which holds traditional services each Sunday at 11am and 3pm. There are 514 people on the Electoral Register. The Duke of Wellington public house plays an active role in village life supporting both church and village activities.

A new housing development of approximately 100 homes is scheduled to commence in 2011, followed by a further development of 45 houses.

Village website [www.ryarsh.info](http://www.ryarsh.info)

### The Church

St Martin's is an attractive Norman church situated some way from the centre of the village. The church seats approximately 100. The church boasts a beautiful Jacobean pulpit and one of only three piscinas in the country dating back to 1150AD. The church has a fine pipe organ and three bells. There is a small but faithful choir. We currently have 37 people on our Church Electoral Roll, and give 10% of our income to Christian charities each year. The fabric of the church is in good order, with internal redecoration as the next project.

St Martin's is very fortunate to have its own Church Hall, 300 yards from the church, providing plenty of parking for services. The Hall, built in the 1970s, is owned and maintained by the PCC. During the summer break of 2010 the toilet block has been completely refurbished to include disabled facilities and a changing area for babies. The work is completely funded by grants and donations. The hall is used for many church and village activities and can be hired for private events.

Excellent contact has been established with the village primary school. Although Ryarsh is not a church school, the incumbent takes a weekly assembly, and leads the Harvest, Easter and Leavers' Services in the church. Ryarsh PCC presents every leaving pupil with a book at the Leavers' Service.

We have a very active outreach programme with a variety of social events : a flower festival, garden safari, 'Gladrags and Glitter' evening, family beetle drive with fish and chip supper and coffee mornings have all featured in the busy diary during the past year.

### Worship and Ministry



*'Our people are the bricks and mortar of our church'*

St Martin's is a vibrant, happy church. It has a very warm and welcoming atmosphere and a congregation of people of all ages.

We have a licensed lay reader and a large, committed team of youth leaders. We are of low churchmanship, with a variety of services both formal and informal.



We currently have a Family Service on the first Sunday of each month. This is led by members of our church family with occasional visiting speakers and has a monthly attendance of between 45 and 60. This service offers something for everyone and the children are very much involved from dramas to prayers to taking the offertory. We are blessed with a talented music group, and worship includes hymns and worship songs. Throughout the year St Martin's has special celebratory services which include a Prize Giving Service for the children of our youth groups. Services are often followed by activities planned for the children: scavenger hunts, conker quests, or egg rolling races at Easter. We hold an annual Remembrance Day Service. Christmas at St. Martin's is a very special time and includes a Carols by Candlelight Service, a Crib Service, and a Christmas Day Family Service.

We have a 1662 Holy Communion Service at 8am on the first Sunday of each month and a Service of Morning Prayer on the fourth Sunday. We feel there is a need to provide a family friendly communion service on the second Sunday of the month, where currently we have a modified ASB Holy Communion. We have ideas about how we might encourage the families and make the service suitable for all ages and are looking for the new incumbent to embrace and promote this vision.

### Youth Work

Youth work has traditionally played an important part in the life of St. Martin's. Today we have four different age groups: Pebbles, Stepping Stones, R.O.C.K.S (Ryarsh Older Christian Kids) and Boulders, catering for children from birth (yes, really!) to thirteen years old. We currently have nine committed leaders dedicated to providing the children with Christian teaching and learning in a relaxed, fun-filled environment. The last eight years have seen an increase in children attending the weekly youth group meetings and families who are actively involved with our family service and church life.

#### Pebbles mother/toddler group

Pebbles mother and toddler group, which meets in the church hall, continues to grow, with over 40 children on the register. This is a great opportunity for outreach and we hope in the future to encourage more of these young families to attend our family services.

#### Stepping Stones/R.O.C.K.S

These two groups, which also meet weekly in the church hall during term time, form the nucleus of children who regularly attend family services.



### Boulders

For this group, which currently meets in a leader's home, we envisage a need to provide a slightly different type of youth group. As we continue to nurture the children on their personal Christian journey of faith, we are hoping that the children of Boulders will be encouraged to consider confirmation and that in so doing they will set an example to the many younger children. We would also like to re-establish the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme which in the past has been very successful at St Martin's.

### Incumbent

We are praying for an incumbent who will be keen to embrace and expand the work currently being undertaken by the youth workers. There is real scope and opportunity, and getting to know the children and their families would certainly be an exciting starting point!





## Trottscliffe - St. Peter and St. Paul

### The Village

Trottscliffe (known locally as Trosley) is a village of just over 200 homes, with 421 on the Electoral Register and 50 children under 13. There is also quite a large number of teenagers, young adults and active retired.

As well as the church, there are two pubs, a well-equipped village hall, a C.E. primary school, a pre-school playgroup and a tennis club with two all-weather courts, lighting and pavilion.



Social events are organised by the Church, the Village Hall Committee, Friends of Trottscliffe School and the Tennis Club. The School, the Playgroup and the Tennis Club all bring families to the village from the surrounding area.

At the foot of the North Downs, the village is surrounded by arable farmland, owned either by village residents or the National Trust. There is also a livery stable and an annual horse show. The village has a very strong sense of community, pulling together when the occasion arises e.g. the threatened closure of the village school a few years ago, and the recent repair to the church tower.

### The Church

The beautiful 11th century church has 46 names on the Church Electoral Roll, and can seat approximately 80 worshippers. The very fine pulpit was brought from Westminster Abbey in 1824 without the knowledge of the Dean and Chapter! (They eventually consented to the gift). The pulpit is rarely used for preaching but remains a striking feature of this simple Downland church. The church is kept open during daylight hours and being on several major footpaths receives many visitors, This helps the very successful sale of home-made preserves. The church's fundraising activities which include the Christmas Bazaar, Harvest Supper, Jumble and Plant Sales etc., are always well supported.

The church has a healthy bank balance which enables us to support several charities on a regular basis as well as having sufficient funds to maintain the fabric of the building.



### Worship and Ministry

St. Peter and St. Paul's has an average congregation of 15 villagers who favour traditional services where the preaching of the gospel relates to everyday life. The Family Service on the first Sunday of the month enjoys music provided by various members of the congregation, and is always well attended as are special services: Harvest Festival, the Remembrance Day Service (often with a bugler to sound the last post), the Crib Service, the Carol Service and the annual Pet Service. A small but loyal congregation attends the monthly 8.00am 1662 Holy Communion and monthly Evensong.

### School

There is a small Church of England primary school (expected roll for September 2010 is 69) attended not only by children from the parish but also from a much wider area. The incumbent would be an ex-officio member of the Governing Body and would be expected to take an active part in the life of the school and lead regular school assemblies. Closer links between school and church could be encouraged.



There is a village website at [www.trottscliffevillage.co.uk](http://www.trottscliffevillage.co.uk) which has links to the school and tennis club websites.



