

St Thomas à Becket, Ramsey e-Bulletin 12 July 2026



One of the things I did during the interregnum was research more about the history of Ramsey Abbey and St Thomas a Becket Church. From about 1000 AD the locals were allowed to worship in the nave of the Abbey Church but, as time went on, the monks felt that the people were just in the way: especially as their services were becoming longer and more elaborate. So, the people were directed to Bury Chapel (built 1130) and Wistow 'church' (erected before 1086) but they were not happy, especially crossing the fens in winter. The Abbot got fed up of hearing the complaints and came up with the idea of using the Abbey hospitium as a church for Ramsey.

So, the monks set about remodelling the building- the top window at the east end was added, wooden partitions removed, walls painted and a font donated. Ramsey had its own church sometime between 1212- 1291. Dates vary but there is certainly a written record of communion being offered in 1291. Actually, the original name was St Thomas of Canterbury Church which was being used even in documents from the Church Commissioners in 1951. The family name was Beket, as his dad had a big nose, and at the time he was just Thomas of London or Thomas the Chancellor or Archbishop Thomas. In the 1530's he was referred to as Bishop St Thomas Becket, but later after Cromwell stripped him of his sainthood' he was just Bishop Becket. The famous 'a' was invented in 1596 by the Elizabethan satirist Thomas Nashe. Nashe coined 'Thomas a Becket' as a playful, mocking nickname intended to turn the revered archbishop into a boisterous, rustic, and comedic character. The Frenchified 'à' (with the grave accent) was later applied by the Victorians to give the name a sense of aristocratic standing!

Over the centuries the church has undergone 6 major periods of renovation- each one removing nearly all the evidence of the previous change. The earliest seating, in the 13th century, consisted of stone benches against the walls for the elderly and infirm. Wooden seats did not appear until the 15th century when sermons became very long – anything from one to several hours. All these changes have been part of an evolution

in the church's rich, living history: adapting to serve both present and future generations effectively.

But I think that the most important aspect of our building is its living continuity. While the architecture and religious dogmas may have changed, the building's core role as a continuous community sanctuary and a steadfast anchor for the community remains its most vital and enduring legacy. God supports changes that fulfil our church's primary mission: making disciples and reaching the lost. Remember church is the plural of disciple. Amen!

With love and blessings - *Shân*

Sunday Services:

Sunday 12 July

8am Holy Communion (Said)

10.30am Worship Together

Sunday 19 July

10.30am *Worship Together with Sunday Fun (Reordering)*

5.30pm Evensong

Sunday 26 July

10.30am *Parish Communion*

Bands on the Green:

We are hosting March Brass Band from 2.30pm to 4.30pm sponsored by Ramsey Town Council. As a church, we will be offering hospitality by serving teas.

Becket Seniors: Our next lunch will be on Wednesday 15 July. We invite you to arrive at 12.15 for a chat before eating at 12.30. Please sign up at the back of church or contact Val Molloy: 01487 710583. Please note that there will be NO service of Holy Communion at this meeting as we are having a speaker from The Bobby Scheme.

Summer Holiday Club: 24 to 26 August 9.15am to 12 noon. Contact Hayley to book: hayley@ramseysandupwood.org

The Children's Society: calling all box holders. Please bring your box to Church by the end of July.

Last year The Children's Society was there for more than 57,000 children and young people. These amazing achievements are possible because of supporters like you. Thank you for your continued support.

Janet - Box Coordinator

Wednesday July 15th at 7 pm - "The People's Emergency Briefing" run by Arun Aggarwal of Ramsey U3A. Admission is free and you can just turn up or register your interest at

<https://buytickets.at/u3aclimategroup/2266566>.

Diary date: That's Entertainment! a concert by Huntingdonshire Concert Band, Saturday 18 July 7pm. Tickets available from Richard Hyde.

Church Summer Clean: Friday 31 July Church Summer Clean 9.30am. Put in your diary, a reminder will pop up in the Bulletin next month!

Do you have any photos or newspaper cuttings of life and church events in the past? This year's Heritage Day is on the theme of "Daily Workings Through the Ages" and we thought it would be good to display some photos of life events such as weddings and baptisms, as well as church events like Sunday School outings or picnics or harvest suppers and celebrations. Even early Remembrance Parades would be welcome. Ideally we are looking for items around 1960s or earlier. I realise these photos are precious so if you can scan them please do so and send them to Jackie. If you don't have a scanner then please hand them to Jackie or myself and we will scan and return the originals to you. Some information about the photos would be useful and if anyone has pictures and details of the big celebration about Ramsey Abbey which took place in 1969 then that would be great. We also hope we may be able to have some of our registers available – people are always interested in those! *Lesley Barker*

Ramsey and District British Legion: VJ service at Ramsey War Memorial Saturday 15th August at 11am.

Clergy days off: as a general rule, Joe's day off is a Saturday.

Regular Activities:

- Mondays:** Toddlers 9.30am – 10.30am
3 in 1 (primary-aged) 3.30pm – 5pm (Scout Hut)
- Tuesdays:** Bellringing 7.30pm
Craft Group 2nd Tuesday of month 7.30pm
- Wednesdays:** Youth Space 3.15pm – 4.30pm
Becket seniors 3rd Wednesday of the month 12.30pm
- Friday:** Choir practice 6.45pm
- Saturday:** Men's Breakfast first Saturday of each month.

Becket Flower Group meet throughout the year for events and to decorate the church for festivals.

For more information about the above activities, contact:
jackie@ramseysandupwood.org.

Bulletin items: please send all items for the Bulletin to
jackie@ramseysandupwood.org by noon Wednesday.

Pastoral Needs: if you have any pastoral needs or would like someone to pray with you, please contact Val Molloy: 01487 710583 or email
valmolloy@hotmail.com

Online Prayer meeting:

Monday to Friday at 8.30am. To join [simply click here](#) Download zoom and join in. Meeting ID: 837 2798 9081 Passcode: 702720

Prayers:

Praying for others is an important part of our church ministry. If you would like our morning prayer team to pray for you, please write your prayer on one of the slips from the prayer board at the back of the church. Then place your prayer in the small wooden prayer box. This is then taken each week to morning prayer to be prayed for over the next few days.

Names can be added to the Bulletin Prayer list by notifying Jan Bowd
janbowd298@btinternet.com or Jackie Southwell 07748 160833. They will be included for 2 weeks unless asked to be renewed.