

## **The Vicar's Letter**

Dear Friends,

This is a sermon I was privileged to preach in Westminster Abbey on 22 April this year – the abbey is the patron of St Mary's Church and has the custom of inviting clergy from the churches in its patronage to speak there from time to time. The reading was John 11: 27 – 44, the story of the raising of Lazarus.

If you look around this church, you will see that it is filled with tombs and memorials. Many of the greatest figures from this nation's history, and many kings and queens, are buried or remembered here. Surrounded by so much history, so much glory and ceremony, by so many of those whom the world calls great, it is easy to forget that each tomb, each memorial, marks the death of a single human being, and therefore it is also a reminder of human grief. Every individual who is commemorated here, no matter how famous or powerful, no matter what they achieved in his or her lifetime, had to pass through the doorway of death, and that is always a bitter thing, both for those who die and those who are left to mourn them. Those buried or remembered here, though they are in some ways all exceptional people, have their bodies or their names kept in this place because they represent the life of the whole of this nation, the lives of all the unremembered individuals who have shared this particular country, one among many of the nations of the earth. We are surrounded by our own brothers and sisters: and at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which you probably passed as you entered the church, we are reminded of the anonymous suffering of humanity itself.

Tolstoy, at the beginning of his novel 'Anna Karenina', makes this famous comment: 'All happy families resemble one another, but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.' I think I know what Tolstoy is trying to say; that happy people attract happiness, and their circle of happiness grows so that no matter where or who they are, people are drawn to them as plants are drawn to the light. Everyone can recognise happiness. Unhappiness, on the other hand, is not attractive, and may be hidden, so that those who are unhappy may become more and more isolated. The constitution of the United States of America declares that it is the right of all to be free to pursue happiness. But no constitution can guarantee that we will find it. What is certain, guaranteed, is that we shall none of us escape our measure of grief. You could say that it is sorrow that binds humanity together. Tears and suffering are part of the human condition. I do not know who I am talking to today, where you have come from, why you are here. Perhaps some of you are not sure yourselves what has drawn you here. But I do know you are my brothers and sisters in humanity, and that at some point we will shed the same tears for our own or for another's pain or loss. Whatever brings us here, and wherever we have come from, God has given us this time and this space to share.

But Christians will always want to say more than this. The shortest verse in the bible – ‘Jesus wept’ – reminds us that God himself enters into human sorrow and pain. The tears of Jesus for Lazarus are God’s tears for the sufferings of humanity, and they are also the tears of humanity longing to see God in the midst of suffering. When we see Jesus weeping before the tomb of Lazarus, we see heaven and earth joined together in the same painful mystery of life. Where life hurts, and especially when death draws close, there is God.

It is because God is present precisely where life is most painful, that we can speak of resurrection, rebirth, life from death. We are in the season of Easter, when the Christian church throughout the world proclaims as loudly as it can, ‘Christ is risen!’ How dare we say such a thing? We see in the world around us, and often enough in our own lives, that the fate of all human creatures is to suffer and to die. The forces of death seem to be the most powerful there are. We look at conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Darfur and elsewhere, we hear the news of senseless killing in Virginia, or we see the helpless suffering of so many of the world’s most defenceless people or of someone close to us – or we live with our own mental or physical agony – and we are tempted to despair. Life seems a weak thing indeed when confronted by death. Martha was afraid to have the tomb of her brother Lazarus opened. All she could imagine was that the corpse of someone she loved was rotting inside; all she expected to encounter was the stench of death. Many people, perhaps all of us sometimes, feel like this about death – it is something best left alone, not confronted, because in death we will find only horror and unpleasantness.

Yet ever since that first Easter, men and women, taking the name of Jesus, have somehow lived as if death does not have the last word – they have lived, that is, in hope rather than despair. I invited you at the start of this talk to look around the church at the various tombs and monuments. I said that they are reminders of grief and of human mortality, and that is true. But these tombs are more than that. Where are they? Where are we, you and I, at this moment? Look around now not at the tombs and monuments but at the church that surrounds all of us, living and departed. What message does this building exist to convey? It is built to speak of God, who is life, and of Jesus, who opens the road to life for us.

In the story we heard from the Gospel of St John, Jesus stands before the open grave and calls with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’ Jesus calls for his beloved friend to come back to life, even though death appears to have taken him for ever. It is about the most incredible command that can be given. How can anyone come back to life? That question ‘how?’ is not answered, and I believe it cannot be answered, but life comes back to Lazarus, because God is there. And ever since the first Easter countless men and women, believing themselves to be beloved as Lazarus was beloved, have heard that call and have moved out of darkness into life and light.

Today Jesus stands facing the darkness of our own doubts, despair and sorrow, and calls us to come out into new life. Let us not ask how it can be done. We too are beloved of God, as Lazarus was loved by Jesus, and life awaits us. Let us join the living.

With love,  
*David*

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## Mothers' Union

At the September meeting Peggy Wright gave a talk entitled, '**Open the Door and Look Inside**'. This was all about the Indoor Members' Prayer Circle (IMPC). Peggy told us of her memories when, as a small child, she accompanied her mother, visiting the elderly and housebound. In those days she was fascinated by the glimpses of other people's lives through windows whose curtains were not drawn as they usually are today. This must have influenced her to undertake the role of representative of the IMPC. After six years' service to this part of the Mothers' Union Peggy is now retiring but her words spoke strongly to us of her devotion to it.

The founder of the IMPC was Edith Moss, a minister's wife then living in Mosley. She had borne five children and then the rigours of the First World War had taken their toll. Edith's health deteriorated and she was suffering both mentally and physically. One day a good friend visited her and they gave each other prayerful support and companionship. This felt so good that Edith decided that it should be shared in the wider community among other housebound people. So it was that, in 1918 with the support of her husband, she started the

IMPC, which was later incorporated within the Mothers' Union in 1921.

Peggy read the well known story of Martha and Mary explaining that she believes that, while we are fit and healthy we can be Marthas, rushing round and being busy and actively helpful; later a time comes in our lives when we are more fitted to being Marys, being still and praying for others. Each role is equally valued by God.

It was an uplifting experience listening to Peggy with her very tangible enthusiasm for the power of prayer. As she says, someone in the circle is sending prayers for the community, (or a named individual if requested) from her home, even if she is confined in some way by disability or age. We can actively pray for others whatever our condition if we are so motivated and this ministry is a powerful and valuable one.

Our next meeting on 2 October is the AGM followed by a talk about the ALM Course by Linda Watson and Jean Morgan.

*Megan Macdiarmid and Jean Morgan*

## Wives' Group

In September twelve of our members spent an enjoyable evening at *The Exhibition* for our Annual Dinner. An adjacent table of mostly men made even more noise than us!

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 9 October when we will have a very short AGM and a talk from Pat Saunders on Godly Play.

*Barbara Thirlwall*

## Men's Social Group

At our September meeting it was a case of the 14th century meeting the 21st century, as Peter Hesseltine gave an excellent presentation on medieval brass engravings using a lap top and the latest software. But although the two media may be poles apart they are both means of conveying information to others using words and pictures. The more interesting brasses dating from after the reformation usually contain full-length figures of the people or families concerned, together with a brief description of their lives – a sort of permanent obituary in brass. However these brasses often contain figures of animals and birds, which have some relevance to the person concerned, such as a dolphin dedicated to a fishmonger. Peter's presentation, which he called 'A Bestiary of Brass' showed the wide diversity of animals and birds which are depicted in brasses, including, in addition to familiar creatures such as horses, rabbits, sheep and deer, more exotic creatures such as elephants, lions,

pelicans and otters. Peter also showed us examples of mythical creatures such as dragons, griffons and unicorns, but perhaps the most bizarre example was of worms crawling out of a skeleton. Maybe if you were thinking of commissioning a brass to commemorate your life you would follow the example of some of the worthies and include the figure of the family pet dog. Many of the brasses which Peter described have been lost, possibly as a result of the activities of Oliver Cromwell, which might explain why there is only one small medieval brass in St. Mary's and this doesn't portray a single animal. Thank you Peter for revealing to us just how much information, apart from natural history, can be gleaned from pieces of engraved brass, if you know what to look for – almost like tapping into Google!

Our next meeting on 2 October will be in the Church Hall at 7.30pm when our speaker will be David Busk.

*Peter Dawe*

## Charity of the month

### Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF)

MAF is a worldwide partnership, whose purpose is to speed physical and spiritual care to people in remote places where flying is not a luxury, but a lifeline. For over fifty years, MAF planes have brought medical care, emergency food and Christian hope to people in need. They serve as the air-arm of the church.

Today, worldwide, the MAF partnership operates over 130 aircraft from bases in thirty countries. Every three minutes an MAF plane is taking off or landing somewhere in the world. These flights enable the work of aid and development agencies, missions, national churches and other local groups by carrying their teams of helpers who bring healing and relief for body, mind and spirit. They fly across deserts, jungles, mountains and swamps, and bring hope to far-flung communities which might take days or weeks to reach by land, where roads may be non-existent or impassable for half the year.

MAF also provides communications and logistics services to mission communities.

In the UK, MAF is a registered charity funded by voluntary gifts. These gifts help finance MAF's overseas operational work and support services, and make stories such as the one below possible.

In Kajo Keji, southern Sudan, two-year-old Viola was in urgent need of a life-saving operation. Viola was born with hydrocephalus, a serious condition caused by a build up of fluid on the brain, leading to extreme swelling of the head. Pilot Gerrit Pap flew Viola, her mother Amando and an aunt to Kumi, Uganda, where an ambulance was waiting to take them to CURE children's hospital in Mbale. Viola's condition was poor, she was malnourished and had a respiratory tract infection, but she was in the best place to be cared for and receive critical surgery.

Following her operation, a doctor from the hospital reports, 'Viola continues to

do well, gradually improving after her surgery. We are watching her closely in the ICU, and pray she will benefit from the effort.'

*David Busk*

## **Congratulations Gill**

Several members of our congregation were at Ely Cathedral on Sunday evening the 16 September to support Gill Bathurst Hoil as she was commissioned by Bishop John of Huntingdon, in her case as a Worship Leader.

Before the service began the congregation was entertained by music led by musicians from Brampton Church *Sing Praise 2* together with the Ely Cathedral *Octagon Singers*. The choir sang an Introit, Psalm 122, a bell rang and the service began with the hymn 'O Jesus, I have promised'. There followed a Reflection by the internationally well known Revd John Bell, one of two resource workers of the Iona Community and a Minister in the Church of Scotland, before the various groups of candidates were individually authorised by Bishop John. We in the congregation had been a little puzzled by the next song, which was led by young choristers from Sutton Parish Church, until John Bell explained that he had been asked to judge a competition in which children had been invited to create their own Christmas carol. He had begun to despair at the difficulty of choosing a winner when he opened the last entry, which had been sent in by a little boy of just three years old:

*Father God, I love you and little Jesus  
I would like to kiss him and give him a  
cuddle.  
I would like to share my toys and play  
lots of games with him,  
Bob the builder we could play; we would  
be the best of friends.*

After the singing of the second hymn and the authorisation of the Pastoral Assistants, John Bell gave another reflection, and we sang a second congregational song. This one, John explained, had been written by a relative of an 84 year old lady who was suffering from Alzheimer's Disease, and so he reflected on how we all, of whatever age and no matter what the state of our health, may have our gifts to offer. The congregation then all exchanged The Peace accompanied by the singing of 'Jesus my Saviour' again led by 'Sing Praise'. The Revd John Bell gave an interesting and amusing sermon before the final hymn and the actual Commissioning of all the candidates.

The final Intercession and Lord's Prayer was led by Worship Leaders authorised in 2006; the choir sang 'A Gaelic Blessing' and we had reached the end of a moving and uplifting service. It was a joy to me, and to the others from St Mary's present, I am sure, to be able to support Gill on this important occasion. We look forward to the future contributions she will make to our church, details of the first of which you will see below.

*Joan Jackson*

### After dark

Following a brief history of the church, a Monastic Supper will be held in the nave of the church on Wednesday 31 October 2007 at 7.00 pm, culminating in Compline (night prayer) by candlelight, as a celebration for All Saints' Day

Tickets at £6 (limited to 40) will be on sale in the church porch after the 9.45 am service from 7 October, or by contacting Gillian Bathurst Hoile on 01480 465442.

## Mission Fair

**Saturday 3rd November 2007**

**2.00 – 5.00 pm**

**at Godmanchester Baptist Church,  
East Chadley Lane  
Buy for Christmas**

Stalls showing the work of Mission organisations supported by the church:  
Anglo Indian Concern (AIC) – Chennai  
Rehoboth Children's Home – Philippines  
SAO Cambodia

Mission Direct - Worldwide

Mission in Central Asia

**Tearcraft** – Crafts that make a difference.

**Traidcraft** – Fine foods fairly traded.

**Books. Children's activities.**

**Refreshments**

**Come and join us!**

## The story of Greenbelt 2007...

This summer the Youth Group travelled to Cheltenham Racecourse for the Greenbelt Christian Arts Festival, thanks to a grant from Huntingdonshire Youth Bank, Godmanchester Town Council last year and fundraising done by the group. The members and leaders of the youth group have all written their thoughts about Greenbelt to share in the magazine.

Judith Ekblom, Jennie Parker, Jennifer Small, David Moger, Jon Mills, Anissia Abbott and Alisha-Mary Abbott all attended Greenbelt, accompanied by Janie and Simon Prince, Jen and Mike Weedon and four other Youth Group Leaders from other parishes. After a three hour journey to the Racecourse we then queued for two hours in the car park, sitting there doing not much and roasting in the hot sun! At last we got in and then had to queue for about another 15 minutes to get on to the field where we were camping. After a couple of tight squeezes in the firebreaks, we found the perfect camping spot. We unloaded the cars and then Janie, Judith and Jennifer jumped in the car and went for the one highlight of the whole weekend! ... a shopping trip to Tesco, leaving the rest to struggle putting up the tents in the heat. The festival started later that Friday evening and went on until midnight on the Monday and the sun shone throughout.

*(Judith age 14)*

Greenbelt was OK, I enjoyed putting grass down peoples t-shirts while we were waiting to get on to the campsite. I also enjoyed playing around the tents on Monday with Jon, David and Anissia. I

hated walking everywhere as after we'd walked down to the festival from the campsite and back a couple of times it got really tiring. I spent ages going around the shops looking for presents to take home. I gave my Mum the T-shirt I decorated in the Christian Aid marquee with a 'Cut the carbon' logo and I gave my sisters a necklace each that I made. This is a warning to anybody who thinks of going on holiday or camping with Jon and David as they snore and always make every tent they go in smell!!!!!!

Beware!!!!

*(Alisha-Mary age 11)*

Greenbelt for me was full of weird and wonderful people from all walks of life, from the man who fell asleep after getting his car stuck in the mud (who had the shock of his life as he woke up to see me and some others taking a picture of his car!) to the Polish ice cream man. Every one was so friendly you could make friends even while lining up at the portaloos (which smelled funny after a couple of days). Every day we had a healthy dose of 'Shaun the sheep' cartoons on the big screen in the arena.

*(Jon age 14)*

Me and Greenbelt.....as it was my first time I didn't know what it would be like..... I had a go singing with the scratch youth choir and made a cool kite. 'Shaun the sheep' was good to watch and Jon went really hyper when they put the Shaun the sheep song on, but most of all Jon and David were the worst and most annoying people there.....when they were snoring. z z z night night...z z z

*(Anissia age 12)*

I didn't know what Greenbelt would be like either but I heard that it was really good from people who went the year before. I ended up going a day late as I was still on holiday in Yorkshire. When I got there it was really busy but I was lucky as I met up with Judith and Jenni almost straight away. Over the weekend we met loads of people and made friends with some of them too. We watched lots of Shaun the sheep and apparently me and John were snoring very loudly.

*(David age 14)*

Yay! I went to Greenbelt for the second time this summer with most of the youth group. We all had a wicked time. The first night we went to the arena, and saw some weird films...one of them was quite scary, the other one had a horse walking around a house and that was even scarier. When we were heading back we found a boy with a "FREE HUGZ" T-shirt. Jenni and I gave him hugs. The next day we went to the arena and watched 'Shaun the sheep' and everyone was a bit silly 'coz they liked it. We made friends called Mark and James, but unfortunately they had rather a bad taste in music. They liked the band 'My Chemical Romance'. (It disgusts me). We then played football, which hurt my toes. I also saw a friend from school called Annie and we went around together for a bit but then I had to go for tea. While we were together we saw the FREE HUGZ' boy and I hugged him again. The next day we went out again, and did lots of activities, but then that night I got sick and it was a bit horrible. I was shivery and burning up inside. Blerrgghh! I had to go to the medical thingy and it was scary. Janie took me back to the tent on a Greenbelt

taxi [a golf buggy]. We got to jump the taxi queue because I was sick! The next day I stayed at the tent for a bit while Jenni and Judith went out and David, Anissia, Alisha-Mary and Jon played at the tents. During the week we also visited the big tent where lots of people are trying to make the world a better place by raising awareness for loads of different causes. We also designed T-shirts to take home to raise awareness of Christian Aid's 'cut the carbon' campaign. I saw one of my favourite bands 'dweeb' who had signed a record deal that very day! The weekend was an amazing experience and I will never forget it! *(Jenni age 14)*

Greenbelt was such a great experience. The music was great too, although not all of it was to my taste. However, Judith and I went to see Kit Ashton, who is a new acoustic singer. He was amazing and I bought his album. There was also a group called the Greenbelt Minstrels who sang in the lifts and they were awesome. Unluckily for me on the last night I ran into a metal bar and had to be half carried to the medical centre by Judith and a boy we had only just met. I had to have all the neurological tests to see if I had concussion. Luckily I didn't, but when I went back outside there were about twenty people waiting for me! Every day we watched 'Shaun the Sheep' apart from Jenni who refused because she didn't like it. Jon made everyone laugh by singing the theme tune really loudly! I had a truly awesome time and met some brilliant people!!! **J** (Jenni P)

Highlights of Greenbelt 07 for me were having a much needed cup of coffee in the Tiny Tea Tent; enjoying the company

of the group and meeting with friends as we sat around enjoying food and conversation back at the tents; joining in with the Surefish Top 10 hymns ('Thine be the glory' was number one) and the Iona Big Sing. I missed many of the talks I would have liked to have gone to, (including Peter Moger's panel 'Am I bovvered' about the future of worship), but luckily a lot are now available to listen to at home. Would I do it again? Yes I would.

*(Janie)*

I particularly enjoyed the 'Get Up, Stand Up' comedy evening, making quite sure that I was *not* on the front row, as I was last year – those in the front row are usually the subject of the jokes. I was able to use my engineering skills to help Alisha-Mary, Anissia, Mike and Jen with flying their kites. Jen, Mike and I went to the 'Jesus Arms' public 'tent' to taste the local beers, although I wasn't so sure about 'Absolution'. Janie was the undisputed champion of the chess tournament we held amongst our group around the tents on Monday lunchtime, seeing off such august opposition as David and Mike.

*(Simon)*

The fact that it wasn't raining when we arrived in Cheltenham (or for the rest of the weekend!) was a real answer to prayer. Although we seemed to arrive at the same time as everybody else (hence the queues) we were able to get out of the cars and lie around on grassy verges, eating our lunch and buying and looking through the excellent festival programmes. With every souvenir programme came two helpful handbag-

sized summary programmes and everyone started planning what they would like to do and see over the weekend.

The great thing about camping (particularly if the weather is good) is that you get to slow down to a completely different pace of life. There are no televisions or computers, so you can make your own fun – playing is good for you at any age! We went with Anissia and Alisha-Mary to a place called the 'messy space' and took part in a kite making workshop, quickly transforming some super-thin waxed-paper material, a couple of sticks and some string and ribbons into objects which we were told would actually fly. We were guided to draw pictures of our hopes and dreams on the kites. Sure enough, our kites did fly very well, so we had a good laugh running up and down the campsite flying our hopes and dreams in the sky. We didn't go to any talks this year but spent a while walking around the charity exhibitions and stalls, listening to live music (Kanda Bongo Man was one highlight) and generally soaking up the atmosphere, as well as chilling out as a group at the tents. We knew we would be able to buy downloads of the talks from the festival website afterwards, so we made the most of the sunshine. On one hot afternoon we headed down with Simon to the 'Jesus Arms', where we tasted 'Absolution' which is a beer specially brewed for Greenbelt and a cocktail called 'The Parable' and listened to lots of 60s tunes. Greenbelt is a great escape – we'd recommend it to anyone.

*(Jen and Mike)*

## Youth Group

Jen Weedon has sent the following diary of events for the Youth Group from October until the end of the year :

Sunday 7 October

Bird Box making

6.45pm-8.30pm Church Hall

Sunday 14 October

NO YOUTH GROUP - HALF TERM

Sunday 21 October

NO YOUTH GROUP - HALF TERM

Sunday 28 October

Service preparation

6.45 pm – 8.30 pm Church Hall

Sunday 4 November

Speaking out! Using voice or sign, and final service preparation

6.45 pm – 8.30 pm Church Hall

Sunday 11 November

Film night (film TBC)

6.45 pm – 8.30 pm, 79 Roman Way

Sunday 18 November

NO YOUTH GROUP

Saturday 24 November

Cake baking challenge

Afternoon and evening, 79 Roman Way and 38 London Road

Sunday 25 November (morning only)

Youth group-led All Age Eucharist

9.00 am in Church for setting up and leading service,

followed by cake stall in Church Hall

Sunday 2 December

The Bible according to the Simpsons

6.45 pm – 8.30 pm 38 London Road

Sunday 9 December

Bring and Share meal/Christmas Party

6.45 pm – 8.30pm, Church Hall

The Youth Group welcomes all young people between the ages of 11 and 17. If you are interested and want more information please contact Jen on 01480 391093.



**Don't miss ...  
'A musical sensation'**

We are delighted to welcome back

**The Boyan Ensemble of Kiev**

who will sing in our Church at 7.30 pm on Sunday 18 November 2007 as part of their 16<sup>th</sup> annual tour. Tickets at £12 (concessions £10) are available from Barbara Thirlwall or Godmanchester Town Hall from October onwards. We would very much welcome help with providing food for the choir before and after the concert, stewards for the concert and also accommodation for choir members on the night of the 18<sup>th</sup>.

(Call Barbara on 457018)

### Another musical delight

On Saturday the 13 October the 'SEDICI' choir will give a concert of unaccompanied music and readings ranging from Morley to Tavener and Handel to Munford (our musical director) including several delightful traditional English songs from the likes of Downland and Bennett. Our music is selected to cover all tastes so please join us on the 13th. Tickets are £6 from Colin Thirlwall (457018) or Fred Munford (356414 daytime).

### Put some of your Christmas into a shoe box – and send it to a child in need!

Big things can travel well in small packages. When you start planning your Christmas this year, why not plan to share some of the joy and fun? For hundreds of thousands of desperately needy children, there will be no Christmas coming at all in 2007 – unless you send it to them. In a shoe-box.

Even as you read this, tens of thousands of people throughout Britain are busy packing shoe-boxes to send out through Operation Christmas Child. The shoe-boxes are easy to fill – but the simple toys which they contain will transform the lives of destitute children in Eastern Europe and other parts of the world this year.

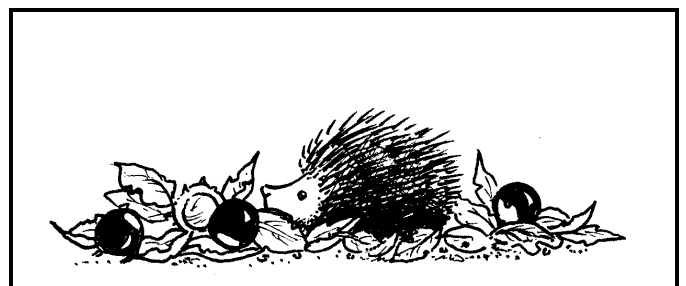
Operation Christmas Child is a project run by Samaritan's Purse International, a Christian relief and development charity. Last year 1.247 million needy children in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Africa received shoe-boxes from children, families and individuals in the UK.

For many of these children, the shoe-box is the first Christmas present they have ever received. The shoe-boxes are given unconditionally, regardless of nationality, political background or religious beliefs.

So – how do you send Christmas to a child in a shoe-box? It's easy! Simply take an empty shoe-box, wrap it in gift paper (lid and box separately) and fill it with small toys, educational supplies, hats and scarves and other items that will bring joy to a child's life.

If you would like to contribute please contact me or visit [www.samaritanspurse.uk.com](http://www.samaritanspurse.uk.com) for more information. There is a flier I can give you full of ideas of what to buy – plus a label to stick on the front of your box. Do please fill a shoe-box and make a real difference to a needy child's Christmas.

*Joan Jackson*



## Flower Guild Outing

For our outing on 15 August this year we chose to go to Blickling Hall in Norfolk one of England's great Jacobean houses, famed for its long gallery with lovely tapestries and collection of paintings. It is also said to be home to the headless ghost of Anne Boleyn!

As we had difficulty filling the coach we invited members of the congregation to join us and forty five of us set off for a day in Norfolk. Two ladies came along for the ride and we dropped them off in a village a few miles from Blickling, where they spent the day with family. The previous two weeks had been wet and cold but we were blessed with a fine day and just one short sharp shower at lunchtime, when we all made for the restaurant.

The Hall is a beautiful red brick building surrounded by formal gardens, parkland and a large lake around which most of us strolled in a leisurely fashion. One of our party tried out an electric buggy and went round in style, while his wife had to stride out to keep up!

There were other things of interest there including an RAF wartime museum, the usual N.T. gift shops, plant sales and an extensive second-hand book shop in an old barn. Before leaving for home at 4.00 pm most of our party could be found drinking tea or having an ice-cream while looking at their book purchases. Emily Orton had the biggest bagful.

What started out as a Flower Guild outing ended up as a Parish one and we thank

everyone for their support; luckily our two ladies were at the appointed bus stop to be picked up on the way home.

Many thanks to Barbara Thirlwall for arranging the day out for us; these trips take a lot of organising but all went well on the day and we all enjoyed ourselves.

*Jean Miller*

## Eco-congregation Award

As you may be aware, we are working towards getting an eco-congregation award for the church and at Greenbelt (see article on page 7) we found out that we can recycle our mobile phones to raise money for Christian Aid. Christian Aid will make £3 from each one we send for recycling. There are three ways to do this:

1. We have got some recycling envelopes at the back of the church. Please help yourself, insert your old mobile and charger and put it in the post for free.
2. Put it in a normal envelope and address it to **Christian Aid UK, Greener Solutions, FREEPOST, LON17592, Mitcham, CR4 3UZ** and post for free.
3. Put it in the box at the back of the church labelled 'Mobile Phones' and I will arrange a collection when we have 20 to collect.

There are apparently 60 million redundant mobiles in the UK and they will cause environmental damage if thrown away into landfill as they contain mercury and arsenic. Christian Aid will make money from each one we recycle. Please pass

this information on to any of your friends who do not come to church or take the magazine so that they can have the address for recycling too.

*Simon Prince* (PCC Environment Lead)

### **The Community Association – Bonfire Night.**

The Community Association was formed with the intention of providing community activities for all to enjoy. There are three major events organised each year. The first is Gala Day followed then by Picnic in the Park. These activities were really successful this year and we were lucky enough to have the Höhefeld Heraldry and Flag Band. They are in fact the Franconian heraldic trumpet and fanfare group from Höhefeld, which is a German village and part of Wertheim with which Huntingdon and Godmanchester are twinned. Members of the band were entertained in their homes by various members of the community. We had two men and two boys to stay and we all enjoyed each other's company very much. The weather was perfect that weekend so they were able to eat breakfast outside on both days, which they really enjoyed.

We were sad that we could not have the duck race this year on the Sunday but the water level was so high that we were not allowed to proceed. Nina Collier and I spent a very pleasant morning in the sunshine sorting out the ducks so in any case they are all ready for next year. Sorting involves picking up each duck (and there are 600 of them), checking that

the number is legible and if not re-writing it, ticking it off on a list and then putting it into the correct box. There were rather a lot of cries 'Oops, wrong box,' followed by a search for the offending duck and also some doubles and some absentees. Eventually they were all boxed and counted and we had some much needed lunch.

Our next event is Bonfire Night, which always takes place on 5 November whichever day it is. This year it falls on a Monday. The display will be at Judith Field as usual and the gates will open at six fifteen. If you have never been to one of these displays I really recommend it. The fireworks are organised with great care and precision and the bonfire is always spectacular. Our two schools always take part in a guy competition. Guys can be made by individuals or by a class in school time. These are then judged by the Mayor or deputy and prizes awarded. The guys are then taken to the field and burned on the bonfire. There have been some very good efforts in the past. Refreshments are available and there is usually a van selling burgers and hot drinks; also children can buy sparklers and glow-in-the-dark necklaces. The evening is well policed and there are always a lot of members of the Community Association (sporting the ubiquitous yellow waistcoats) on hand to help. Parking is usually available on the small business site next door. The firework display is always well worth seeing and much enjoyed by everyone there. Proceeds are then put towards an even better display the next year!

*Jean Morgan*

## July PCC Meeting

*Minutes in full of PCC meetings are displayed on the south door notice board. Here are some key points from the July meeting*

### Matters arising

**Loudspeaker System** – The sound engineers will be visiting to assess any adjustments required to the new system. Particular faults appear to be with the lapel radio microphones.

### Communicating services to deaf people

A number of people in our Church have indicated a willingness to learn signing. The Revd Charles Dixon, Chaplain among the deaf and deaf / blind is keen to get some Churches in the area involved in communicating services to deaf people.

### Proposal for changing the All Age Eucharist

There have been discussions in general terms with the Worship Group and Ministry Team and casual discussions with various members of the congregation and the consensus view that the All Age Eucharist should be changed stems from:

- (1) Declining numbers attending the AAE, especially of families with young children.
- (2) The Eucharistic service is fairly long.
- (3) The Eucharist excludes non-communicants.
- (4) Part of the aim is to introduce a regular act of worship which is as accessible as possible for those who have little or no experience of the church.

### Finance Committee

The balance of regular income against expenditure for year to date shows a deficit of £4,666. There have been some repairs to fabric but the main reason for the deficit was lack of income. It is increasingly likely that non-regular income will have to be used to balance the books.

### Fabric Committee

- (1) The continuing problem of pigeons at the west door was in hand.

- (2) The PCC approved expenditure for the installation of a fire alarm in the ringing chamber/west door.
- (3) Instructions have been received from the Diocesan Advisory Committee to have the quinquennial report carried out.
- (4) The leaded lights in the vestry and porch have been repaired/replaced after the break-in.

### Communications Committee

Grace Vane-Percy had taken 145 photographs of the church and its interior and the Committee were meeting to select four external and eight internal images and these would then be printed

45 people had visited the church on Sunday afternoons, the largest numbers coinciding with other functions such as the Gala weekend.

### Development of Tower and North-west Corner

After much discussion, it was agreed that, in principle, we should move ahead with plans already drawn up. The first step is to look for a lead person for a fundraising/development group.

### Any other business

The Youth Group had sent the completed ECO congregation audit to the appropriate authority which had sent back several modules of stories/activities for brainstorming and focusing on some environmental issues. Different groups within the Church would be asked to complete these modules and return them to Simon Prince to complete the final forms.

*Trevor Weedon*

### And finally...

Congratulations to Chris Higgins, our bellringing guru, who celebrated his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in somewhat unusual style on 21 September. His friends and fellow bell ringers threw a surprise Baroque party for him in St Edward's Church, Cambridge (music by Handel, Daniel Purcell, Telemann *et al*) preceded by some Stedman variations from the bell tower and a birthday salute with firing of the bells! A well-deserved tribute, Chris. Many thanks for all you do on our behalf.

## G O D M A N C H E S T E R P A R I S H N E W S

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### The Registers

#### Baptism

26 August George Edward Jordan  
Eva Iris Ann Hurst

9 September Evie Lauren Drane  
Jake Samuel Usher

#### Funerals

15 August Gisela Gould  
21 August Gordon Young  
31 August Emily Dorothy Knight

### The Lectionary

7 Oct **Harvest Festival**  
**Trinity 18**  
Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Phillipians 4:4-9; John 6:25-35

14 Oct **Trinity 19**  
2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c; Luke 17:11-19

21 Oct **Trinity 20**  
Genesis 32:22-31; 2 Timothy 3:14 – 4:5; Luke 18:1-8

28 Oct **Bible Sunday**  
Isaiah 45:22-end; Luke 4:16-24

### Dates for your diary

#### October

Mon	1	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones	Baptist Church Centre
Tue	2	2.00 pm	Mothers' Union	Queen Elizabeth School
		7.30 pm	Men's Social Group	Church Hall
			Speaker: Revd David Busk	
Thu	4	9.30 am	St Mary's 0s-5s	Comrades Club
		9.45 am	Holy Communion	
Fri	5	7.30 pm	Choir Practice	
Sat	6	10.00 am – 3.00 pm	<b>GIFT DAY</b>	Church
		2.30 pm	Readers' Licensing Service	Ely Cathedral
Sun	7	8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist	
		6.30 pm	Harvest Songs of Praise	
Mon	8	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones	Baptist Church Centre
Tue	9	8.00 pm	Wives' Group	Church Hall
Wed	10	10.30 am	Holy Communion	Oak Tree Court

## G O D M A N C H E S T E R P A R I S H N E W S

		7.15 pm	John Barnard Workshop of Christmas Music	St Mary's Church, Ely
Thu	11	9.30 am	St Mary's 0s-5s	Comrades Club
		9.45 am	Holy Communion	
Fri	12	7.30 pm	Choir Practice	
Sat	13	7.30 pm	Concert by 'Sedici' Choir	Church
Sun	14	8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist	
		11.30 am	Grassroots	
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong	
Mon	15	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones	Baptist Church Centre
		8.00 pm	Sign Language Session	Vicarage
Tue	16	7.30 pm	PCC meeting	Church Hall
Wed	17	11.00 am	Holy Communion	Woodley Court
Thu	18	9.30 am	St Mary's 0s-5s	Comrades' Club
		9.45 am	Holy Communion	
		7.30 pm	Prayer Group	36 Old Court Hall
		7.30 pm	Hunts Philharmonic Rehearsal	Church
Fri	19	7.30 pm	Choir Practice	
Sun	21	8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist	
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong	
Mon	22	1.30 pm	NO Stepping Stones (Half term)	
Wed	24	9.45 am	Holy Communion	McCartney House
Thu	25	9.30 am	St Mary's 0s-5s	Comrades Club
Fri	26	7.30 pm	Choir Practice	
		7.30 pm	Churches Together information and Prayer Meeting	tba
Sat	27	2.00 pm	Wedding: Paul Fricker and Joanne Kasey	
Sun	28	8.00 am	Holy Communion	
<b>Bible Sunday</b>		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist	
		11.15 am	Parish Meeting re new style service	Church Hall. To be confirmed at
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong	
Mon	29	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones	Baptist Church Centre
		8.00 pm	Sign Language Session	Vicarage
Tue	30	8.00 pm	Worship Group	10 East Chadley Lane
Wed	31	7.00 pm	'After Dark' Monastic Supper and Compline	Church

**The Editorial Committee meeting** for the October magazine will be held on **Sunday, 21 October**. Would you please ensure that material is with one of the following by that date and if possible not later than **Friday, 19 October**.

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Joan Jackson (joan.jackson@ntlworld.com)

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