
The Vicar's Letter

Dear Friends,

Until two years ago, the mission agency USPG had a training establishment in Selly Oak, Birmingham, called the College of the Ascension. People went there not only to prepare for going overseas as mission partners (the current jargon for missionaries), but also came from overseas for courses of study, or to teach. It was a marvellous meeting place for the world church, representing every tradition and nationality. (Sadly, lack of funds meant the college had to close in 2006, a huge loss to the church in this country.) Fourteen years ago, I spent six months there before going out to Japan. I met many remarkable people there – and I must just name-drop that through the college I had a chance to sing for (not solo!) and shake the hand of Nelson Mandela, but that's another story. I also met, and got to know rather better, Father Harcourt Blackett, a Catholic priest from Barbados, who was there as a visiting fellow. After our time at the college, our paths diverged – Fr. Blackett went to Zambia for several years before returning to his native Barbados to become administrator (equivalent to Dean) of St Patrick's Cathedral, while I went via Japan to Godmanchester.

Last week at the Vicarage, we met again for the first time in fourteen years. We were reunited by Shirley Bowers, a member of Medway Christian Fellowship in Huntingdon, who is bringing to light a forgotten story involving Oliver Cromwell, Ireland, and Barbados. As part of his drive to subjugate Ireland, Cromwell authorised the transportation of a great number of Irish Catholics to Barbados either as indentured labourers or as slaves. No-one is sure of the exact number transported, but it was many tens of thousands from Ireland, as well as some from England, Scotland and Wales. These white Catholic transportees, who were given the nickname of 'red legs', formed a doubly oppressed community, both as slaves and as adherents of a persecuted faith. Their descendants have mostly mixed with the black population, but among Barbadian Catholics the memory of this double oppression remains. Shirley Bowers and a small group of supporters feel called by God to pray and work for the healing of these bitter memories, in England, Ireland and Barbados.

We like to think that the past is simply the past. But we are all inheritors, for good and ill, of what has gone before. If one group of people has been disadvantaged by history, that disadvantage can last for generations; and we know only too well that resentment of unresolved injustice is one of the most powerful motives of conflict. Conversely, bringing people together in the name of the God whose Spirit is the healing of the nations, can lead to remarkable friendships flowering across divisions. Sitting in my study during my unexpected re-union with Fr. Harcourt and hearing how he and Shirley Bowers are working for the healing of an historical hurt that connects Huntingdon with Ireland and Barbados, I had a sense of the working of that Spirit, who has also brought me back into touch with a friend. No other expression will do – God truly does move in mysterious (and wonderful) ways.

With love, *David*

Mothers' Union

At the May meeting Ros Wright came and showed us how to make our own 'beads of prayer'. She had brought with her a wonderful selection of beads for our use and we all sat round a table while she demonstrated the different articles we could make. She showed us how to make a personal rosary by using different colours to act as reminders during prayer time, such as blue to say sorry, red to pray about things that have made you angry, orange for your family and so on. We could choose to make a Lord's Prayer bracelet with a different colour bead for each phrase. She showed us a selection of colours to represent psalm 23 and then we could make a sort of holding line of beads with a cross attached, to remind us of the fruits of the spirit. There were many other choices too. When she had finished we were all invited to make our own 'Beads of Prayer'. We really enjoyed this activity and there was an air of quiet concentration as we engaged with the task. We all came away with something intensely personal which will certainly enhance our prayer times. It was a very spiritual afternoon.

At the next meeting on June 3 Jean White will talk about her experiences while living in Africa.

Jean Morgan



Wives' Group

Fourteen members of Wives' Group visited Madingley Hall gardens in May. The gardens cover seven acres and have been developed over 300 years. The oldest parts of the hall were completed by 1600 and then a new wing was added in the 18th Century. At the same time Capability Brown reshaped the formal gardens. We were given a tour of the gardens by Sue Nixon, a volunteer gardener, whose expert knowledge greatly enhanced our appreciation of the trees, shrubs and plants. The gardens divide into three main areas, the largest being the north garden with its magnificent trees bordering the perimeter path. There is also a sheltered courtyard garden which the walled garden which are subdivided into an alpine bed, herb garden, hazel walk and themed borders. All are beautifully managed and contain an amazing variety of plants.

After the tour we retired to the splendid saloon on the first floor for a welcome hot drink and cakes. From here we enjoyed the wonderful view across open countryside enhanced by Capability Brown's design.

The gardens are open to the public for the NGS on the afternoons of Sunday 13 July and Sunday 7 September.

Next month we will be visiting Paxton Pits Nature Reserve on the evening of Tuesday 10th June. Anyone wishing to join us (including gentlemen) please contact Barbara Thirlwall (457018) or Voirrey Butterworth (456608)

Barbara Thirlwall

Men's Social Group

At our May meeting we were pleased to welcome Trevor Weedon and Chris and Barbara Popplestone from the Huntingdon branch of the *Gideons* who gave us an insight into their work. *Gideons* is an international association of professional and business men and their wives who seek to share their Christian faith with others by placing copies of the Bible in various public places such as hotels, hospitals, prisons, airport lounges and even on cruise ships. Copies are also made available to organisations such as the armed forces and the emergency services.

The association was started in America in 1899 and was established in the UK 1949. It has groups working in one hundred and eighty countries with bibles being printed in over seventy languages.

Over one million copies of the bible are distributed in the different countries every seven days. The *Gideons* have about 3300 members in the UK; the Huntingdon branch, which has eighteen members, is responsible for most of the old Huntingdonshire area which includes the Hinchingsbrooke, Papworth and Cromwell hospitals. Every year they distribute about two thousand copies of the New Testament with the Psalms to all year 7 pupils at the start of their secondary education. All administrative costs are borne by the members themselves with donations being used only to purchase copies of the bible.

All *Gideons* are members of their local churches but see themselves, and their work, as part of the activity of the worldwide church in reaching out to others with the Gospel. They believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God and as such is very relevant to the lives of everyone. They consider its contents have the power to transform lives, and we were given a number of examples of this happening in different situations. Every Gideon bible has a list of references that a reader, going through difficult times, might find helpful and comforting. In a section giving the background to the Bible, there is reference to some words spoken at the coronation ceremony, when the new monarch is given a copy of the Bible with the words, 'We present you with this book, the most valuable thing this world affords.' Perhaps in their desire and efforts to make the Bible widely available to others, the *Gideons* are challenging us all as to how much we value the Bible and the importance we give to it in our own lives and in our worship.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 3 June when the Thackrays have kindly agreed to host a BBQ at their home in Allen Farm Close.

Peter Dawe

Genuine fellowship comes when Christians stop relating to one another as righteous saints and accept one another as unrighteous sinners.

David Watson

Who's who in the parish

Introducing our new curate, Mary Jepp, and her husband Mike.

It was doubly kind of Mary and her husband Mike to afford time for us to interview them recently, especially as they were both up to their eyes in decorating No.48 London Road. It was delightful talking to them – both are charming and friendly – and it quickly became apparent that Mary, who is obviously a person full of energy and vitality, will be a tremendous asset to all of us at St Mary's.

Mary is a Canadian by birth, although she has lived in this country for sixteen years. She was brought up as a Roman Catholic, attending Catholic schools, and on leaving school trained as a teacher, but then took a secretarial course, as no teaching jobs were available. (Joan was interested to discover that she is one of the few of us left who can still write, and still uses, shorthand!). Mary explained that whilst growing up in the 70s there had been many changes within the Roman Catholic Church and she, together with many other young people in Canada, had become disillusioned, particularly as the church was clamping down on many forward-looking changes. During her formative years Mary had been very active in the Guide movement, including running a Brownie pack.

After a time, Mary did manage to obtain a teaching post in Labrador, in the very north of Canada, where there was no Catholic church, and that led her further away from her roots. Whilst

in Labrador she was asked to go to a dance at the RAF station at Goose Bay which turned out to be very eventful, since it was there she met Mike, fell in love, and was eventually married in her own parish church. In due course Mike and Mary returned to England where, in recent years, Mike was stationed at RAF Wyton until he was made redundant, and he is now working as a design engineer at Marshalls of Cambridge. He works on military aircraft, mainly Hercules and Tri-star, that fly into the airport at Cambridge where the necessary work on them is completed and tested. Mike hinted that although his work is very interesting and enjoyable, he is looking forward to retirement. Among his many interests is the restoration of classic cars!

In recent years Mary and Mike have been living in Bury, near Ramsey, and worshipping at Bury and then Upwood. One amazing thing we learned about Mike is not only that he is a keen bell ringer, but he actually learned to ring in Godmanchester, and has recently been ringing in Bury. Mike told us that he is not himself a regular worshipper, but is totally supportive of Mary and has encouraged her in her recent training. He has, however, been accustomed to doing lots of practical tasks in church. Mary and Mike have two sons, Robin, who is 20, is taking a military gap year – I don't think either of us ever knew there was such a thing! – and is in Afghanistan. He is one of only eleven soldiers there who is being taught the language in order to become a translator. Robin apparently likes old-fashioned church music, rather than

modern songs. Their younger son, Toby, in his final year at Hinchbrooke, is about to take his 'A' Levels. He is a keen musician, playing several instruments, and his ambition is to become a violin maker.

Back to Mary. On their return to England Mary eventually returned to teaching, doing peripatetic work in various schools in the north of Cambridgeshire supporting difficult and disruptive pupils. At the same time she started a three-year part-time course of study to train for the ministry on the Eastern Region Ministry Course (ERMC) at Cambridge University, as a member of the Cambridge Theological Federation. The Federation includes a number of theological training colleges (not only of the Church of England but also Methodist and Wesleyan). Mary mentioned that most people on the course were still working, which enabled them to meet all sorts of people, keep their feet on the ground and stay in touch with reality whilst studying in the worlds of academia. The academic demands of such training, coupled with the strains of dealing with and educating difficult children with many problems, must have been immense. This speaks volumes for Mary's energy and commitment. Every two months her course entailed a weekend away and one of her placements was to Leicester Cathedral, an experience which she thoroughly enjoyed. Her last essay was completed and handed in last week, and Mary praised Mike's skills as an editor and proof-reader. Towards the end of her second academic year in July 2007,

Mary received a phone call from David Busk inviting her to come and have a chat. This delighted her enormously as only three ordinands who complete their studies this year were offered places in the Ely diocese.

Mary and Mike told us that they had tried to sneak into the back of St Mary's one Sunday to get a taste of what we were like, but before they could get seated one of our sides-people had come up to them, asked their names, and welcomed them. We thought this a great compliment to our sidespeople and welcomers. Well done!

We look forward to welcoming Mary as she takes up her role as assistant curate at St Mary's. We know that in David she will find an ideal and caring incumbent as she continues her training. She will be ordained Deacon in Ely Cathedral on Saturday 28 June, and her first Sunday with us will be the following day. We feel sure that we are all going to enjoy Mary's energetic and vivacious personality as we get to know and love her in the years ahead. We pray that God will bless her and that she will be happy and fulfilled in her work amongst us.

Joan Jackson and Peter Irving

'Who's who in the parish' continues next month with Elizabeth and John Callaghan.

God gives His gifts where he finds the vessel empty enough to receive them.

C.S.Lewis

The other Huntingdon

Dorothy Groves died one year ago this month, leaving behind an unfulfilled ambition: to produce for the magazine an account of Huntingdon, Quebec while visiting Canadian relatives who live there. Completely out of the blue, Bruce Dodd, Dorothy's cousin, wrote to the magazine saying: 'As you know Dorothy didn't make the trip, and won't be writing that story. But I thought she would want me to have a go, even without her talent, her flair and herself'. What follows is an abbreviated form of Bruce's letter.

Huntingdon (population less than 3,000) is located between the U.S. border and the St Lawrence seaway. It is part of a regional municipality called Haut-Saint-Laurent, which contains the contiguous Municipalites of Hinchinbrooke, Godmanchester, Franklin and Dundee as well as Huntingdon, which suggests where the first settlers may have come from. Many of the people who homesteaded in the Huntingdon area in the early 1800s were demobbed British soldiers; others came as United Empire Loyalists from the United States. The nearest big town is Valleyfield. The nearest city is Montreal.

The present town grew around a grist mill on the Chateauguay River, and became the centre of the surrounding agricultural community. To the north the agriculture is largely dairy and Huntingdon is widely known for its cheese. Further south the cow yields to the apple. Apples of every variety abound, with cider orchards producing apples for the successful ice cider drinks industry.

Since the thirties Huntingdon's woollen mills have done very well with such innovative products as 'Yukon Fleece,' and have long produced the red serge of the Mounties' tunics. Foreign imports did not do them a lot of good, and a decision to bring that serge from China was the last straw. The small business section of the town isn't fancy. There hasn't been a lot of spare cash for modernisation and fancification, but people rarely have to go to Montreal or the States for ordinary needs. The town is laid out in a mostly square grid of streets lined with maple and oaks. There are lots of churches – Anglican, Presbyterian, United Church of Canada (2) and Roman Catholic (4).



The elderly high school, the Huntingdon Academy, was to be renamed with something new and trendy until local howls forced a reversal. An excellent regional newspaper, *The Gleaner*, has been published in Huntingdon regularly

since 1863, and you can Google it! That should give you some idea of Huntingdon, Quebec.

The two Huntingdons are as chalk and cheese. Dorothy would have written you an excellent, perceptive and more entertaining comparison of them.

Charity of the month

Committee for Family and Social Welfare

The Committee is composed of representatives from each Archdeaconry as well as from non-denominational churches, and also members from interested diocesan committees. There are four social workers, and the aim is to help all people in need of social advice or attention. The clients (usually suggested by the clergy or pastoral care workers) are people who have often not realised, in their distress, that help is at hand. One of the greatest achievements of the Committee is the setting up of Child Contact Centres across the diocese, where divorced and separated parents can meet with their estranged children in a warm, friendly room. The Committee is financially supported by parishes from across the diocese, and I am proud to say that Godmanchester has been one of its most supportive.

Jean White



Our Annual Summer Fête

will be held on Saturday 21 June
from 2.00 – 4.00 pm

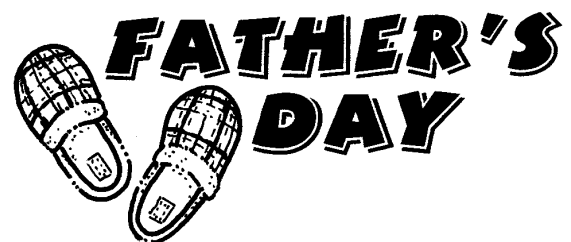
in the Vicarage Garden

The Fête is one of our two major fundraisers of the year so please come along and enjoy the attractions. Varied stalls (including cake stall), teas, ice-cream, games and fun for adults and children alike. Admission 50p

This month's cover

Lawrence Back's photograph shows Mary and Mike Jepp with their younger son Toby. Mary will be ordained in Ely Cathedral on Saturday 28 June.

The third Sunday in June is



Choral singing is good for your health **

When, later this month, the International Church Music Festival, which attracts choirs from the US and Europe, is held in Coventry (20-22) June, you can be sure of one thing: just singing the music makes the singers feel better.

A Swedish psychologist has researched the effect that choral singing has on a person – and concluded that it is very good indeed. Dr Maria Sandren, from the University of Stockholm, found that choral singing ‘had strong effects on the well-being, in that positive emotions increased significantly, and in turn, negative emotions radically subsided. Choral singers, particularly women, are happier, more alert and relaxed after a rehearsal.’

Other recent research seems to say that content is also important: ‘a number of singers referred to the religious character of the music, and the impact which it had on them.’

(So now you know, choir members and others of you who sing, why you are a cut above those of us who only struggle to sing!)

The Salvation Army

Silver Street

Coffee Morning

Every Tuesday 10.00 am to 12 noon

Everyone welcome!

May PCC Meeting

Minutes in full of PCC meetings are displayed on the south door notice board. Here are some key points from the March meeting as there was no meeting in April.

Matters arising:

(a) **Non-conformists’ Burial Ground**

Tony Sursham has offered to have this area put in order and landscaped. The PCC has asked the Secretary (Trevor Weedon) to write to Tony Sursham to say the Council received his offer with great warmth and appreciation and they would wish to support and offer encouragement to him in this generous undertaking. It was noted that the Church does not own this land but this should not stop Tony from going ahead with this work which will be much appreciated by all concerned.

(b) **West Door Path**

Cambs Highways have offered to cover the existing surface with a 6mm topping coat of tarmac free of charge.

(c) **Admitting Children to Communion**

David Busk advised that his report to the Bishop’s Office was in course of preparation.

(d) **Loudspeaker System**

Problems are still being experienced. It was agreed to ask the sound engineer to come back and we will see what he recommends concerning possible need for new radio microphones and

balancing lapel microphones with lectern and hand-held microphones.

Ministry News

David Busk advised that Mary Jepp would be finishing her work as a teacher soon and be moving into the Curate's house at the end of May. Her ordination will be in Ely Cathedral on Saturday 28 June.

Reports

(a) Finance Committee

Colin Thirlwall reported that the Church had spent £1,262 more than it had received so far this year. The Quinquennial Inspection is coming up and will cost us money.

(b) Fabric Committee

A new three-year agreement had been made with the Town Council for grass-cutting in the churchyard, at just over £400 per quarter.

(c) Communications Committee

The Parish group photograph to be taken on 18 May will form part of a photo display giving a full picture of parish life.

It was agreed that it would be good to have coffee in church after the 9.45 am service on special occasions such as to view the new photo display.

Any other business

(a) 2008 Lent Concert

Ken Diffey reported that the Lent Concert went well. However, less than 100 attended, half of whom were attached to the choir themselves. He was therefore very disappointed with the low turn-out. David Busk

responded that it was a splendid concert and is a worthwhile event in its own right. He thanked Ken for all his hard work.

(b) Godmanchester in Bloom

Simon Prince reported that the Youth Group had volunteered to plant about 1,000 bluebells in an arc in the churchyard in front of the non-conformists' area. He also advised plans for the Godmanchester in Bloom project – anyone can be involved, both where they live and in other areas around the town. People were being asked to identify areas of the town which needed tidying up and/or would benefit from planting trees or flower beds. Photographs should be sent by e-mail to John Thackray with suggestions about what could be done.

Trevor Weedon

And finally . . .

June 15 is Father's Day. It is acknowledged in most countries of the world, but not necessarily on the same date. Most places opt for the third Sunday in June; but in Thailand it is celebrated on the King's birthday. While it is a secular celebration, we nevertheless offer prayers of thanks for our fathers and male carers. As with Mother's Day, the occasion is a bonanza for retailers – electric tools, ties and greeting cards sell well. But in the USA, the most profitable companies are those providing reverse charge telephone calls – which probably tells us more about our children than our fathers.

The Registers**Baptisms**

11 May Matthew Owen Harrison

Weddings

10 May Robert Douglas Andrew Green and Bibian Searle

16 May Duncan Edward Malone and Anne Verna Hayes

Funerals

15 May Madeleine Ann Chicken

27 May Phillip Carr

The Lectionary

- 1 June **Trinity 2**
Deuteronomy 11:18-21, 26-28; Matthew 7:21-end
- 8 June **Trinity 3**
Hosea 5:15-6:6; Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26
- 15 June **Trinity 4**
Exodus 19:2-8a; Romans 5:1-8; Matthew 9:35-10:23
- 22 June **Trinity 5**
Jeremiah 20:7-13; Romans 6:1b-11; Matthew 10:24-39
- 29 June **Saints Peter and Paul**
Zechariah 4:1-6a, 10b-end; Acts 12:1-11; Matthew 16:13-19

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

Dates for your diary

June 2008

Sun	1	8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist	
		11.30 am	Healing Service	
		2.30 pm	Holy Baptism	
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong	
Mon	2	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones	
		7.30 pm	Young People's Leaders' meeting	Church Hall
		8.00 pm	Signing Group	79 Roman Way
Tue	3	12.15 pm	Churches Together Prayer	All Saints Huntingdon
		2.00 pm	Mothers' Union Meeting	Queen Elizabeth School
			Men's Group Barbeque - Time TBA	7, Allen Farm Close
Wed	4	11.00 am	Holy Communion	The Chestnuts
Thu	5	9.45 am	Holy Communion	
		10.00 am	St Mary's 0s – 5s	Comrades' Club
		8.00 pm	Communications committee meeting	23, Earning St
Fri	6	7.30 pm	Choir Practice	Church Hall
Sat	7	12 noon	Wedding: Paul Rogers/Helen Turrell	
Sun	8	8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist	
		3.00 pm	Carers' Service	
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong	
		6.45 pm	Youth Group - Editing films/chilling out	Church Hall
Mon	9	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones	Baptist Church Centre
		8.00 pm	Signing Group	79 Roman Way
Tue	10	7.30 pm	GMC in Bloom	QE School
		8.00 pm	Wives' Group	Church Hall
Wed	11	10.30 am	Holy Communion	Oak Tree Court
Thu	12	9.45 am	Holy Communion	
		10.00 am	St Mary's 0s – 5s	Comrades' Club
Fri	13	7.30 pm	Choir Practice	Church Hall
		9.00 am –		
Sat	14	12.00 noon	Vicarage garden working party	
		2.00 pm	Wedding: Mark Crawley/Jennifer Coles	
Sun	15	8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist	
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong	
		6.45 pm	Youth Group - Editing films/chilling out	Church Hall
Mon	16	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones	Baptist Church Centre
		8.00 pm	Signing Group	79 Roman Way
Wed	18	11.00 am	Holy Communion	Woodley Court
		3.30 pm	Pastoral Group Meeting	Vicarage
		8.00 pm	Bible Study Group	10 East Chadley Lane

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

Thu	19	9.45 am	Holy Communion	
		10.00 am	St Mary's 0s – 5s	Comrades' Club
		7.30 pm	Prayer Group	36 Old Court Hall
Fri	20	7.30 pm	Choir Practice	Church Hall
Sat	21	2.00 pm	Church Summer Fête	Vicarage garden
Sun	22	8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist (Teaching)	
		11.30 am	Children in Communion Workshop	
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong	
		6.45 pm	Youth Group – Film: 'Shaun the Sheep'	79 Roman Way
Mon	23	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones	Baptist Church Centre
		8.00 pm	Signing Group	79 Roman Way
Wed	25	9.45 am	Holy Communion	McCartney House
Thu	26	9.45 am	Holy Communion	
Fri	27	7.30 pm	Choir Practice	
Sat	28	3.00 pm	Ordination of Mary Jepp	Ely Cathedral
Sun	29	Mary Jepp's first day in parish		
		8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist	
		o/c	Coffee & cakes to meet Mary Jepp	Church Hall
		4.00 pm	Ecumenical Service	Rectory Gardens
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong	
		6.45 pm	Youth Group – Planning for picnic and Greenbelt	Church Hall
Mon	30	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones	Baptist Church Centre
		7.30 pm	Governors' Meeting	St Anne's School
		8.00 pm	Signing Group	79 Roman Way

The Editorial Committee meeting for the June magazine will be held on **Sunday, 15 June**. **Would you please** ensure that material is with one of the following by that date and if possible not later than **Friday, 13 June**.

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