

# New Prospect



The Parish Magazine of St Mary Stoke Newington

April 2006



The Uprooted Cross  
*Photograph from Mark Perret*

## A visit to the Hackney Winter Night Shelter

*Hackney Deanery have a link with Bishop's Waltham in Hampshire. The churches there support us in various ways: they help with the annual Youth Camp, and each year they send a minibus full of food, blankets and other things to help the Night Shelter. Norman Chatfield from Bishop's Waltham recently visited to see the Night Shelter for himself. This is an article he wrote for the Parish Magazine in Bishop's Waltham.*

I was able to visit the Hackney Churches Night Shelter on behalf of the Hackney-Bishop's Waltham Link a few weeks ago. The Shelter is operated by an ecumenical team of seven churches every night from January – March. My visit, arranged by the Night Shelter co-ordinator Jonathan Gebbie, was to Our Lady of Good Counsel, Stoke Newington. It followed

the Licensing of Alan Piggot as the new Parish Priest of St Mary of Eton, Hackney Wick, so I didn't arrive until 10pm, when the operation was in full swing. Doors opened at 8pm. There can be up to twenty guests to sleep overnight and another ten or so for supper. That evening there were fifteen. The week before there had been men and women, but that evening they were all men. Volunteers from the parish had provided a good supper. One of the cooks, Mary, described how she worked out a really nutritious menu making sure vegetables were all cooked in with a mighty hotpot because otherwise they tended not to be eaten. Other cooks, a retired couple, when it was their turn, spent the day getting the food ready at home and rushed it to the Centre at the right moment. Then there was coffee and tea and chat with the volunteers. A man from Glasgow who didn't think much of the Government. A young man looking like a film star but with learning difficulties. A Jamaican who kept saying "Thank you so much, thank you so much and by the way do you have a spare tooth brush?" Beds were made up, clip together beds similar to those some of you will have slept on in your Service days, and sleeping bags unrolled. Lights out at 11pm when everyone turned in. A quiet night apart from occasional snores to which I certainly contributed. Other nights can be far less quiet with emergencies needing attention.

At six a.m. the first volunteer arrived and began frying bacon. By 7am all the breakfasts had been cooked, more help had arrived including two nuns and a sister visiting from Ireland. I did the drying up which was the safest option in a strange kitchen. The beds were all taken apart and the hall made ready for its daytime use. 8 a.m. and the guests left. It's a sobering thing to see fifteen men each with all their worldly possessions in one bag going out of the warm hall on to dark wet streets not knowing what the day has in store.

In chapter 1 of Revelation John writes to the Seven Churches of Asia. Here Seven Churches of Hackney are reaching out in Christ's name to the homeless and we are privileged to be able to help both by donations of money, the food sent in the Christmas run and taking part in events where we can meet as brothers and sisters in Christ.

*Norman Chatfield – Deaneries Link Committee*

## The Symbolism of Eggs



For Christians and Pagans, the egg symbolises the start of everything. The egg, in its unique and perfect ovoid form, is associated with the

spring festivals of revival and rebirth and for Christians, it is a symbol of the Resurrection and hence, Easter. Many of us take the egg for granted as a staple of everyday life. At the beginning of each day, for example, why do we "go to work on an egg"? It is amazing that such a small thing can provide so much protein and energy, that it can "lift" us and nourish us in itself. Its imagery as a "golden sun in a bright white sky" or a "hingeless box of golden treasure" are just a couple of pictures of the egg as a source of inspiration.

The rising and rebirth of the sun on Easter day was a time of great celebration and dancing in an Aryan belief but only because the sun rose and not for any other reason. To commemorate the rising of the sun, red and golden eggs were exchanged as they symbolised the birth of the new sun, which linked together the various Creation myths associated with the egg. The Pagan goddess 'Eastre' or 'Eostre', is thought to have been the reason why the festival received the name 'Easter'.

It was also believed among some during medieval times that by taking an Easter egg into a church, a male can discover whether there are any negative energies present and also the identity of any witch inside the church! Were there any witches in the congregation, their true identity would be revealed to him. He would recognise witches by the fact that they would have pieces of pork in their hands rather

than prayer books, and instead of bonnets each witch would have a milk pail on their head! No inferences, of course, to any among our own congregation! However, milk pails on heads instead of hats... mmm...I wonder! Should we also consider replacing Service sheets with a plate of ham? I think not.

In many countries, it was once believed that the universe began with a single primal or cosmic egg. Either heaven and earth were two parts of a single egg or the first human sprang from one. In Peruvian mythology, three eggs were dropped to earth by the Sun. The golden one gave birth to the aristocracy: the silver egg gave birth to women, and the copper egg gave birth to peasants. Chinese, Greek, and Roman heroes occasionally sprang from eggs which may have been spat out by dragons, swallowed by their mothers, or hatched by the sun or a bird. Because of these myths, eggs are a symbol of the universe, and the creation of the world.

Augustine himself equated the egg and its chick with the virtue of Hope. He based this symbolism on the following passage from the Luke's gospel: "If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:11-13). Augustine thought that these verses urged Christians to seek the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity. In this case, 'Faith' is represented by the fish and 'Charity' by the bread (Letters of Augustine).

Eggs were used to symbolise a hope common to many cultures - that of rebirth into new life after death. They were found in many pagan and Christian graves and tombs as a symbol of this hope and, in the case of pagans, as nourishment for the dead on their final journey. And in some religions, the egg was a symbol of reincarnation, but Christians saw the chick emerging from its shell as a symbol of Christ coming out of the tomb on Easter morning. Eggs were blessed and used in Easter ceremonies, hung on altars and tombs and even under the feet of Christ Crucified as emblems of the resurrection. Red eggs were

used to remind believers that new life sprang from the blood of Christ.

For a long time it was forbidden to eat eggs during Lent, so Christians began decorating the spring surplus of eggs and gave them as gifts on Easter morning to celebrate the resurrection and the end of the Lenten fast. In Ireland, it was customary to eat eggs for breakfast on Easter morning. The Ukrainians make special Easter eggs called Pysanky by drawing wax designs on raw eggs and then dipping them into a dye bath. It was believed that pysanka-writing was an important weapon against the Devil and if Pysanky were no longer made the world would be engulfed in evil or simply ceases to exist.

Romans believed the "lustral egg" was so pure that it had the power to drive away evil spirits and so used them in rites of purification. (Lustral here meaning things associated with ceremonial purification.) The purity of the egg is ascribed to its white, virginal colour and to its perfect oval shape which has no entrance for any type of contamination. The ostrich's egg is believed to be the most perfect egg of all and yet, in the Old Testament book of Job, she leaves her eggs on the ground, warming them in the dust, forgetting that a careless foot may crush them, or that a wild beast may break them. She treats her young harshly, as though they were not hers...because "God deprived her of wisdom, and did not endow her with understanding."

The Old Testament is full of references to eggs. Mosaic law forbade Israelites who found a nest in the wild from eating or keeping the mother bird along with her eggs. They could enjoy the eggs as they liked but the mother was to remain free (Deuteronomy). The desolation and abandonment of a city was represented by the fact that wild animals now felt free to lay their eggs in it (Isaiah). Job felt it was right that complaining accompanied his afflictions and problems just as salt accompanied egg whites (Job). The king of Assyria arrogantly boasted that his conquest of the nations was as simple as the gathering of eggs (Isaiah)!

Despite a world full of egg symbolism, I still like mine poached!

Happy Easter.

Mark Perrett

## Holy Animals



Following on from the article I wrote a couple of months ago about holy flowers, I thought it would be interesting this month to look at some of the stories which surround animals in Christian art and legend. These stories usually take one of two forms. Either they are 'morality tales' drawn from the supposed qualities – good and bad – of the animal in question, or they are 'true stories' of the part played by animals in the stories of saints.

The idea of the 'morality tales' is a very old one, and found its expression in the form of the *bestiary*, a book which drew moral instruction from the supposed habits of real animals and mythical beasts. The first known example of the kind was set down in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and the 'information' such books contained was systematically arranged in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by a monk at Monte Cassino. One of the places the resulting legends often found expression was on the underside of misericords, the tip-up seats provided for monks which had a little shelf on which they could rest during the long hours of the offices which were said standing-up.

Almost any animal could have a legend attached to it, from the most ordinary domestic

to the most exotic wild one. Let's start with the most obvious of all – the lamb. Jesus was called the 'lamb of God' first named as such by John the Baptist when he saw him at the beginning of his ministry. We still use that title every time we celebrate the Eucharist. In Christian art, the lamb is often pictured surrounded by a 'nimbus', or full body halo, from which the four rivers of the new creation of Revelation flow. These four rivers can also be associated with the four Gospels, or the four rivers of Paradise. Lambs in Jewish custom were associated with sacrifice, and most particularly with the Passover. In commemoration each year of the 'passover of the Lord' when God slew the first-born of Egypt but spared the Hebrews, the Jews of the Temple era sacrificed a lamb. The 'Passover meal', which Jesus asked his disciples to prepare, would have had a lamb as its centrepiece. John's Gospel, which has a slightly different chronology from the other three, has Jesus's death on the cross taking place at exactly the moment when the Passover lambs were being sacrificed in the Temple. The point was that Jesus was the only sacrifice needed in the new covenant.

Sometimes, Jesus is represented not as the lamb but as the Good Shepherd. In those cases, the lamb represents us, the sinners. Jesus lived in a rural economy in which raising sheep was an important part of daily life, and sheep featured in some of his most famous parables. At the very end of his earthly ministry, he charged Peter to 'feed my sheep'.

Another animal especially associated with the Easter story is the ass. Asses had a mixed press in Christian symbolism. In some circumstances it represented lechery, and to be mounted backwards on an ass was a sign of degradation. They were also regarded as stupid and obdurate, and therefore a symbol of those who refused to accept Christ. What's more, asses were the symbol of the deadly sin of sloth. On the other hand, asses also get a good press. It is a symbol of humility. Jesus chose an ass to ride on in his entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and traditionally the dark cross marked in the fur on the back of every ass dates from that day. Following the prophecy in Isaiah about an ass knowing his master's crib, asses are traditionally featured in pictures of the Nativity. It sometimes comes as

a surprise to learn that the ass, and his companion the ox, aren't actually mentioned by either Matthew or Luke at all.

Some animals are associated with particular saints, and the presence of the animal is the easiest way of identifying the saint in question. For example, an emaciated man with a morose expression could be most early mediaeval saints. But throw in a lion, (morose or cheery to taste) and it almost certainly becomes St Jerome. St Roch, very popular in France although barely known here, is always accompanied by his dog. The presence of the dog is sometimes the only way to tell St Roch, who is often dressed as a mediaeval pilgrim, from St James the Great. Another depiction of the dog is the black and white dogs which were sometimes associated with the Dominican Order. This is a pun on their name, the *domini canes*, or dogs of the Lord, and on the black and white habits they wore. The pig, which was of course an unclean animal to Jews, was particularly associated with St Antony of Egypt, as a symbol of the lusts of the flesh which he, as a noted ascetic, had given up. A stag with a cross between its antlers was the symbol of St Eustace and St Hubert because of the legend that in both cases they were converted by seeing a stag with a cross between its horns when they were out hunting – in St Hubert's case on Good Friday. A stag, or deer, is also associated with the soul seeking God, from the beginning of Psalm 42 ("As the deer longs for the waterbrooks, so longs my soul for the Lord").

In some ways, the most interesting animals in sacred art are the mythical animals. There are a large number of these – some gentle, some dangerous and sinister. Take the unicorn, for example. The unicorn was supposed to be so fierce and swift that it was impossible to capture it by conventional means. Instead, it had to be brought into the company of a virgin. Sensing the purity of the virgin, it would run to her and lay its head in her lap, where it would go to sleep and could then be captured and led to the royal palace. This legend, originally a pagan one, has been appropriated by the Church, so that the unicorn laying its head in the Virgin's lap symbolises the incarnation. The unicorn being led captive to the royal palace symbolised the betrayal of Christ in the garden at Gethsemane. The

unicorn's horn also became the symbol of the 'horn of salvation'.

What of the cockatrice, on whose den the weaned child shall put his hand when God's kingdom comes, in Isaiah's prophecy? This is a fictitious creature hatched by a serpent from a cock's egg. It has the head, legs and wings of a cock, and a serpent's tail. Its eyes are fierce, so fierce that its looks can kill. A similar creature is the basilisk, who had the same unfortunate habits of killing with a single glance. This one had the body of a dragon to go with its cock's head and wings. Not just its looks, but its smell could kill and its breath could burn up everything in its path. Its place in Christian mythology was as a symbol of evil over which Christ would triumph by trampling it down.

And finally among the mythical creatures, the dragon. This too symbolised the spirit of evil. In the middle ages, it also represented heresy. In the book of revelation, Satan is called the great dragon, who waits to devour the child of the virgin. Many saints proved themselves by slaying dragons. Most familiar to us, of course, is St George (feast day on 23 April). George came from the district we now call Turkey and was martyred near Lydda in Palestine. The legend of his slaying of the dragon came to popularity through Caxton's *Golden Legend*. The story was that the dragon was terrorising a local area. At first it was kept at bay by being fed two sheep a day. Eventually the sheep ran out, and a human, chosen by lot, had to be substituted. The lot fell on the king's daughter (as tends to happen), but before she could be sacrificed, George captured the dragon and tied it up with the princess's girdle. His price for ridding them permanently of the beast was that they should all accept baptism. St Andrew, St Margaret of Antioch and St Martha are all associated with dragons, and St Margaret in particular is often shown leading one captive. In the book of Revelation, the archangel Michael slays the dragon, representing the devil, during the war in heaven.

My last creature is topical and a mixture of the real and the mythical – the Easter bunny. Why is this animal so much the symbol of Easter? Well, some of it is obvious. Rabbits breed at this time of year. They are clearly associated with springtime and with new life.

The Easter bunny therefore has its origin in pre-Christian lore and fertility symbols. In fact, the original symbol was associated as much with the hare as with the rabbit, but the latter are much more common. The rabbit as a specifically Easter symbol seemed to have its origins in fifteenth century Germany. They also made the first edible Easter bunnies in the 1800s. These were originally made not of chocolate but of pastry and sugar. The idea reached America through emigrants in the 1700s, particularly to the areas known as Pennsylvania Dutch (from *deutsch* or German, rather than Dutch as we now think of it). The arrival of the 'oschter haws' or Easter hare, was eagerly anticipated by children, in the same way as they waited for the Kris-Kringle, or Christ child at Christmas. They believed that the hare would lay a nest of coloured eggs if they had been good, and it is from this that the idea of an Easter basket has also developed.

*Judith Simpson*

## **Stewardship Campaign 2006**

This year we are having a renewal of our stewardship programme – which is the way in which we as a body here provide for the financial needs of our parish. You may have seen the notices on the entry to church, reminding us that it costs over £2000 per week to run St Mary's. Actually, now it's nearly £3000. That's a lot of money – but between us it's quite manageable. Stewardship is about planning our giving, in relation to our own resources and the needs of the church, rather than just pitching in what we happen to have spare at the moment. The stewardship renewal invites us all to consider what part of our financial resources we could and should be contributing to enable the church to do its work in this community.

### **Stewardship is about responding to God ... in thanks for what we have now**

- our worship, the main purpose and focus of our corporate life, through which we are brought close to God and God comes close to us

- a community learning together what it means to live the Christian faith in twenty-first century London, unafraid of change and ready to face new possibilities and challenges together
- a church which reaches out to serve its neighbours, both locally and globally
- a fellowship of people of all ages, races, classes and opinions coming together in the Church
- a growing congregation, who know how to enjoy our life together

#### **in thanks for what we have been given**

- Our Church has worshipped God, worked and witnessed in Stoke Newington for a thousand years. This long history comes to us as a free gift.
- Our predecessors in the Parish have provided us with two magnificent churches: the only Elizabethan church building in London; and a superb gothic revival 'cathedral' as our parish church.
- The church school was built for us, so that the Christian Faith can be passed on to the children of our parish.

#### **in hope of what we might be in the future**

We who enjoy this heritage do so because of the financial sacrifices and personal devotion of other people in past years. It is our responsibility to ensure that this heritage is handed down improved by us. Without our work and/or money, it can't happen.

As we all know, the community around us changes day by day. As a parish, we need to provide ourselves with the resources to respond to those changes. For example

- we have in our parish three primary schools as well as our church school, a secondary school and a pupil referral unit. Should we be looking to employ a children and youth worker to help us serve the children living and learning in our parish?
- there is a great deal of poverty in our parish, hidden behind the expensive shops on Church St. Should we be

putting more resources into alleviating the effects of poverty?

- we already have good resources of buildings – we are now looking at a major project to develop the Old Church. We will need external funding, but that will only come if we show that we are committed to the project as well

– and I could go on. The potential is there, and the extent to which we are able to respond is directly related to the amount of money that we as a body are prepared to contribute.

#### **Receiving and giving**

Stewardship is not a taxation system. No-one's going to name and shame you if you don't cough up. It's a way of focusing on two things: the greatness of God's generosity to us; and what is the right way for us to be generous in return by supporting the work of Christ's body the church.

It's not all miserable – the first event is the Stewardship Supper, on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May in Abney Public Hall on Church St. Our speaker will be Paul Hullyer, curate here a few years ago. Come and enjoy!

*The Rector*

#### **Stewardship Supper on Friday May 5<sup>th</sup> 2006 in the Abney Public Hall.**

The Stewardship scheme is due for renewal this year and as usual we will be starting the whole campaign off by a Supper. In order to accommodate us all, Abney Public Hall has been hired for the evening. The social committee have agreed to organise the catering. We are a smallish group and would therefore be more than grateful for any help that anyone can offer to help set up the tables and prepare the food. If you are able to help us on the night could you let me know so that I can then organise things accordingly. My telephone number is 0208 802 4921. Many thanks.

*Jean Guest  
Convenor Social Committee*

## Another Hymn Writer



### **William Cowper 1731 – 1800**

William Cowper was an English poet and one of the most popular poets of his time; Cowper changed the direction of 18th century nature poetry by writing of everyday life and scenes of the English countryside.

He suffered from periods of severe depression, and although he found refuge in a fervent evangelical Christianity (the source of his hymns), he often experienced doubt and fears that he was doomed to eternal damnation. However, his religious motivations and association with John Newton led to much of the poetry for which he is best remembered.

William Cowper was the fourth child of Rev. John Cowper, Chaplain to George II. He was born in Great Berkhamsted; however his older siblings died and his mother Anne died in childbirth when his brother John was born. He was sent to Dr Pittman's Boarding School where he was severely bullied for two years until his persecutor was expelled.

When he was ten he went to Westminster School where his interest in the Classics was fostered. He left Westminster and was articled to Mr. Chapman, solicitor, of Ely Place, Holborn, in order to be trained for a career in law. During this time, he spent his leisure at the home of his uncle Ashley Cowper, and there fell in love with his cousin Theodora, whom he wished to marry. His uncle felt that the two were too closely related and would not allow the marriage. This refusal left Cowper distraught.

In 1763 he was offered Clerkship of Journals in the House of Lords, but broke under the strain of the approaching examination and experienced a period of depression. At this time he tried to commit suicide three times.

He was placed in Dr Nathaniel Cotton's Asylum in St Albans. Dr Cotton was a poet and

was evangelical in his religious life. Cowper so improved under his care and so enjoyed his company that he stayed at St Albans after he had recovered. It is suggested that while here he wrote the hymn "How blest thy creature is" although it was first published in the Olney Hymns in 1779. He resigned as Commissioner and became dependent on relatives and friends for financial support.

He moved from St Albans to Huntingdon to be nearer his brother John in Cambridge. (John was a Fellow of Corpus Christi College.) William was no good at financial management and he and his servant managed to get through a year's allowance in three months.

One day Cowper met William Unwin coming out of Church, and soon they became fast friends. Unwin introduced Cowper to his parents the Rev. Morley Unwin and his wife, Mary. He took up lodging with the family and what was intended to be a fortnight's stay became a 22 year association.

About 18 months after he first moved in with the Unwin family the Rev Unwin was killed in a riding accident and Mrs. Unwin made the decision to leave Huntingdon and wished to live in a town where they would be under the pastorship of an evangelical minister. Where better to go than Olney where the Rev John Newton was the curate?

They moved to a house called Orchard Side not far from Newton's vicarage. At Olney, Newton invited Cowper to contribute to a hymnbook that he was compiling. These were later published as the Olney Hymns in 1779. There are 348 hymns of which Cowper wrote some 66 between 1772 and 1773 including "Praise for the Fountain Opened" and "Light Shining out of Darkness" which remain some of Cowper's most familiar verses. Newton wrote the remaining 282, including one of his most well known and much loved hymns "Amazing Grace".

In the garden of Orchard Side there is a tiny building "not much bigger than a sedan chair". Cowper called it his Sulking Room and he spent much time there. Built by the previous owner, Thomas Aspray, as a Smoking Room, it continued to serve the same purpose when Newton joined Cowper there. The ground between Newton's vicarage garden and Cowper's garden belonged to Mrs. Aspray and our two friends paid her a guinea a year for the

right of way; it is still called Guinea Field today. In 1769 Mrs. Unwin became seriously ill and Cowper became very distressed at the thought that he might lose her.

Apart from organising the practicalities of life, which were beyond Cowper, Mary Unwin was an intelligent and sympathetic companion. She was deeply religious and although only some twelve or so years older than Cowper he seems almost to regard her as a surrogate mother figure. He wrote "Oh for a closer walk with God" at this time. Fortunately, Mary recovered.

In 1770 William's brother died and he left Cowper a small legacy. It was suggested by well meaning individuals that Cowper and Mary should marry and indeed they became engaged later that year. His mental health deteriorated under the strain. He had terrible nightmares and believed God had rejected him.

He moved to the Vicarage to avoid the Olney Cattle Fair, which took place near Orchard Side, and the week's stay turned into fourteen months. Another suicide attempt was made; at first he refused to take his medication but his cousin Judith Madan persuaded him to take those she recommended. He again was treated by Dr. Cotton and gradually recovered. In the aftermath of his illness the engagement was broken off. In 1774 Susannah Unwin left Orchard Side to marry the Rev. Matthew Powley, thereby leaving her mother unchaperoned but no more was said about his possible marriage to Mary Unwin.

In 1779, after Newton had left Olney to go to London, Cowper started to write further poetry. Mary Unwin, wanting to keep Cowper's mind occupied, suggested that he write on the subject of The Progress of Error, and after writing his satire of this name he wrote seven others. All of them were published in 1782 under the title Poems by William Cowper, of the Inner Temple, Esq..

The year before this publication, Cowper met a sophisticated and charming widow named Lady Austen who served as a new impetus to his poetry.

For many years there had been growing dissatisfaction with Olney. The owner of the large estate at Weston Underwood, a neighbouring village some two miles from Olney, offered Cowper and Mrs. Unwin The

Lodge in the village. They gladly accepted Sir George Throckmorton's proposal. Cowper's cousin Lady Hesketh organised the move.

While at Weston Underwood, Cowper received from his cousins in Norfolk a portrait of his mother. He wrote a moving poem "On Receipt of my Mother's Picture". It is said that not a day went by without William thinking of the mother he lost when he was six.

In 1784 Cowper began his translation of Homer. It was finally published in 1791, and he was paid £1000 for the copyright.

Mary Unwin's health worried Cowper greatly. She had suffered two strokes and her arm was partially paralysed. After 1792 her health rapidly declined and it was now his turn to nurse her.

Finally in 1796 the two invalids were moved to Norfolk in the hope that a change of scene would help. In fact the elderly couple were virtually forced to move to Norfolk. It became obvious that Mary Unwin could no longer manage the household and Lady Hesketh, who lived mostly in London, could not keep spending months at a time in Weston Underwood. They lived in various lodgings with William's maternal cousin, John Johnson before finding a home with him in East Dereham.

This had a detrimental effect on Mary Unwin's condition and to William's despair in December 1796 she died. Although he had sat with her a few hours before her death, she was buried at night without her companion being told. Johnson was fearful of the effect of the burial service on William's mental state.

He did, however, continue revising his Homer for a second edition of his translation, and, aside from writing the powerful and bleak poem "The Castaway," penned some English translations of Greek verse and turned some of the Fables of John Gay into Latin.

Cowper was seized with dropsy in the spring of 1800 and died in East Dereham, Norfolk.

*Andrew Yoshiro*

## My Sunday School Remembered

*"I wash my hands this morning, so very clean and white;*

*I lend them back to Jesus, to work for him till night;*

*Little feet be careful, where you take me to,  
Any work for Jesus, I will surely do."*

This Chorus was one of many I sang at Sunday School. I went to two Sunday Schools on Sundays – *The Anglican Sunday School* in the morning and *The Pilgrim Holiness Sunday School* in the afternoon.

I always looked forward to going to Sunday School. It was what children did. When you were a child in Antigua, going to Sunday School was part of your upbringing: it was part of your culture.

Everyone got involved: your parents, your aunts and uncles, even neighbours. Before you set off for Sunday School, your parents would counsel you:

"Now, behave yourself. Don't talk in the class. Listen to your teacher, learn all you can. You must have and show respect in the presence of God, and I want to hear what you learned when you get home. Be a good child; let me be proud of you."

So off you went to Sunday School. You did all your talking and praying before you went to your class, because once Sunday School commenced, it was down to learning. I wanted my mother to be proud of me; so did all children. You remembered her last words: "Let me be proud of you." Because you loved your mother so much, because of what you saw in her eyes, you had to learn your lesson and make her feel proud, and what satisfaction you felt!

At The Anglican Sunday School we were taught the Creed, your duty towards God, the Lord's Prayer and stories from the bible. You would be asked questions on what was read and you could ask questions on what you did not understand. Then those who were older and could read the bible would read individually and explain what they understood, and others would be asked if they had any comment to make – it would be an exchange of ideas and learning from each other.

Every child knew the Lord's Prayer. We would also be taught the Beatitudes or Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5, 1-12), also 1 Cor.13, 1-13 and Eccl. 12, 1-14) and many Psalms. We had to recite them (of course the lessons were taught according to your age). We went to Sunday School to learn about God and learn we did, so from youth you had quite a lot of knowledge about the bible. As you can see, learning about God was of vital importance to your upbringing: it was to help to shape your character for the future.

Now going to The Pilgrim Holiness Sunday School was in some ways different. The adults as well as the children went to Sunday School. Everyone met in church for the Chorus singing – that was very good. You'd be clapping your hands. Some people would be playing guitars, the organ would be playing, the tambourines would be shaking and the people would sing and dance – such enjoyment!

The Choruses were always about scriptures from the bible. About Jesus, angels, prophets, kings, patriarchs, sins, the devil, the disciples, the flood – almost everything from Genesis to Revelation. Such singing and shouting, such joy and happiness, and how much you learned! It is very easy to learn by singing, especially if the tune is catchy, if you know what I mean. Then after the Chorus singing you were dispersed to your classes and you had to learn your Golden Text. What is a Golden Text? A Golden Text is a verse or part of a verse from the bible. It would be connected to the lesson or story that you were taught. It was vital to know your Golden Text. On your way home from Sunday School any elderly person you met would ask you: "What is the Golden Text for today?" and you must or should be able to tell them. If you could, you were highly praised. "God bless you. Your mother must be very proud of you."

After the Sunday School you would go to visit your aunts or grandparents or some elderly friend of the family, and you could rest assured that they left some food for you. It was the best part. When you got to their home you would greet them and they would in return greet you with flattering words: "Hello darling!" "What a way to look nice! Is that a new dress or new shoes?" "My, you are looking really nice." "Did you learn anything at Sunday School today? What was the lesson all about?" And all the

time you were dying to get the food that was waiting there for you.

Then came the question: "What was the Golden Text?" and if you did not know it they would give you a hard time. "Other children know the Golden Text. You were not paying attention. Look how your mother put herself out to make you look pretty. How do you repay her? You should be ashamed of yourself." By the time they were finished, your appetite was gone: that food you wanted so badly had a bad taste. So you see it was vital to know the Golden Text. "Now if you can say the Golden Text you are a nice child – you are my favourite, you are so clever" – and your food tasted so nice! Sometimes you got a bonus penny to buy your sweets tomorrow. You had to tell your mother the lesson and repeat the Golden Text, then you'd get a kiss and a cuddle also. If by chance you or your friend did not go to Sunday School, when you met up with them you would ask "What was the Golden Text?"

So you see going to Sunday School was not about your parents needing a break from you. It was your culture, It was to help to shape you for the future. It felt good. I loved Sunday School. What I learned in Sunday School I have never forgotten; it was a pathway to my Christian life. Thank you, Mama, for making sure I went.

Sunday School had its fun times also. For Christmas and Easter we had Sunday School concerts, and we had an annual Sunday School picnic – all things we looked forward to.

Here are some of the Choruses we sang:

A,B, C, D, E, F, G  
Jesus died for you and me  
H,I,J,K,L,M,N  
Jesus died for sinful men. Amen  
O,P,Q,R,S,T,U  
We believe God's word is true  
V and W  
God has promised you  
X,Y Z(ee)  
A Home eternally

Satan your kingdom must come down  
Satan your kingdom must come down  
I hear the voice of Jesus saying  
Satan your kingdom must come down

Behold, behold, I stand at the door and knock,  
knock, knock  
Behold, behold, I stand at the door and knock,  
knock, knock  
If anyone hears my voice, if anyone hears my  
voice  
And will open, open, open the door  
I will come in

Jesus gone to prepare a mansion for me  
Far, far away over the sea  
There'll be no sorrow, no death and no fear  
For Jesus gone to prepare a mansion for me

*Morlean Jayasundara*

*Watch this space for further "Sunday School Memories". Eds*

## From *Our Sunday School* The Poem of the Month

### **Food** *By Ijeoma Uzodinma*

Deep peace is flowing through my vein.  
Food and hunger is everyone's pain.  
Taking the food for granted indeed  
Not caring about anyone's need.  
Lord our God, Jesus, fed five thousand  
With only two fish and bread on the sand.



## Little Gidding



I knew Little Gidding the place long before I'd heard of TS Eliot. When I came across the poem (the last of his 'Four Quartets') the fact that he'd got it so right was part of what formed my good opinion of his skill as a poet. When I first went, in the 50s, the pigsty was one of several farm buildings, most of which now house people instead of animals. The pigsty remains, as does the big old barn, set in a courtyard of sorts, across the lane from 'Ferrar House', which is open for visitors.

Nicholas Ferrar, who has December the 4th, the day of his death, allotted to him in the Anglican calendar, started a community there in the 17th century, the first that had been attempted since the dissolution of the monasteries. I'm no historian, but from what I have gleaned inadvertently this was looked on at the time as a very peculiar thing to do. Particularly so very close to Oliver Cromwell's hometown, it was even rather a dangerous enterprise. Charles the First visited three times and was sheltered nearby, bringing down the wrath of the Roundheads, who sacked the place, throwing the lectern in the pond. All this excitement was after Nicholas's death, however. As far as I'm concerned, what is more important and relevant does seem still to be there in the place and in Eliot's poem. In Nicholas's time the Psalms were read aloud in the church round the clock, books were bound, neighbours succoured... an active and contemplative life. This is a place where 'prayer has been valid', where one can find the 'still point of the turning circle - now and in England'. The house is available for any sort of visit, but seems to me particularly suited to deeply refreshing individual or small group retreats. The current wardens, Tony and Judith Hodgson, are the dreamers who bought the property in the 70's and set up the trust by which they are now employed.

As I said, I first visited in the '50s. At that time there was an annual pilgrimage led by the Bishop of Ely on the first weekend of July. My parents

would hire a car (a Ford Popular) and we would have a picnic in the field after which we'd process to the little church. On the way home we'd visit my granny in Cambridge and I'd pester for my dad to take the Royston Road home, because I enjoyed the cat's eyes along the old Roman roller-coaster.

Later on I drove myself there in my 1957 Morris Minor. I've been by bicycle, from Huntingdon railway station, in my VW combi, when I slept in the car park and probably in just about every other car I've owned. Recently I was there working, helping do teas - very hot and sticky, lumpy in shorts and apron, with dish-wash hands, when my glamorous cousins turned up in an enormous white Mercedes!

That's not really relevant either. It's just that I'm writing this in Northam, Western Australia, the small town where my mother was born, and I'm enjoying letting my mind roam around those old memories. I'll be back by the time you read this, but copy date is the day I fly home, so I have to write it here. The temperature in the last couple of days has been in the low 40s Celsius. That's 102 degrees (plus) in old money! I'd like to encourage you all to come out here, but failing that, how about a trip up the A1? I have recently become secretary to the Friends of Little Gidding. Membership is £15 a year - but you don't have to join to visit. In particular on the weekend of the 20th/21st May there will be a mini festival, with a children's poetry competition, a walk to Steeple Gidding and a candlelit reading of the poem in the church to mark the 70th anniversary of TS Eliot's visit. In the meantime, refreshments will be available at Ferrar House after the 6pm Evensong on April 30th and you'd be warmly welcomed at any other time too. I also have a personal list of people I'll let know when I'm going up, in case anyone would like to come and keep me company. Please let me know if you'd like to be kept posted in that way, preferably by email to [susannaferrar@btinternet.com](mailto:susannaferrar@btinternet.com). You could also contact Tony and Judith Hodgson direct at Ferrar House, Little Gidding, Huntingdon, PE28 5RJ, 'phone 01832 293 383, email [info@ferrarhouse.co.uk](mailto:info@ferrarhouse.co.uk).

*Susanna Ferrar*

## THE NEW CHURCH ITS ORGANS, MUSIC AND SERVICES ETC.

### (6) The Bombing, October 13, 1940

By October 13, 1940, London had endured 36 consecutive nights of bombing raids (daytime raids were also frequent). People living in Stoke Newington knew, each night, what to expect. The bombing - often carried out by well over a hundred planes - was widespread and caused immense damage, many casualties and much loss of life. What church people could not understand was why churches were also being targeted by the bombers (St. Matthias in Howard Road, for example, was severely bombed on Friday, September 27, 1940, being heavily damaged and practically ruined by incendiaries). This deeply affected morale. But the truth was that bombing - outside such areas as the docks - was largely indiscriminate, although the Germans possessed highly accurate maps of London (and we know that photographs were taken from high-flying reconnaissance aircraft during August and September).

During the hours of darkness, German aircraft would normally arrive over London at around 13,000 feet (crews had been specifically warned of increased accuracy from anti-aircraft guns at their pre-flight briefing on October 13). However, from this cruising ceiling, visibility was generally poor at night, although large areas of water (docks etc.) could be identified, especially when illuminated by reflected light from burning buildings nearby.

Sometime between the hours of 7 and 11pm, 210 German planes launched a bombing raid on London. It is thought that one or more flew over Stoke Newington, and that sometime during the night (the raid finally ended at around 6 am on Monday, October 14) two bombs were dropped on St. Mary's churches - probably from the same plane. One landed on the north side of the Old Church, and the other fell on the north side of the New Church. As to the latter, we do not know the actual point of impact. Throughout the war, fire services accurately documented every 'incident' on a report sheet, and there were many reports submitted that night in Stoke Newington. However, none exist for St. Mary's

for October 13, although of course they could be lost.

The big church withstood the impact, although the wall of the north transept (opposite the organ) was destroyed. We do have a pencil sketch of the back of the Old Church, drawn shortly after the bombing from the rear, and the last three western bays of the New Church can clearly be seen across the road - apart from smashed windows all look intact and the main roof undamaged.

Official records clearly state that both bombs were classed as 'high explosive'. One possible theory about the relative lack of damage is borne out by the account of one of the Sunday School teachers, a Miss Hicks. Some time later she wrote -

"Both churches had been disastrously hit, although the Rectory providentially escaped. In the afternoon I was waiting in Green Lane(s) for the bus and saw to my relief that the spire was still standing and pointing to the glory of God. *I also remember spending a good many afternoons trying to clean the horrible brown stuff which covered the Eagle Lectern. I think that we tried every imaginable brass polish to no avail. At last, of all the unexpected things, we tried beer - and that did it - I don't know what some people would think if they knew!*"

The 'brown stuff' could not possibly have come from anywhere inside the church. It is highly probable, therefore, that the HE bomb was in fact an 'oil bomb' (some German planes were dropping these in addition to conventional bombs). This type of bomb contained a nominal explosive charge, which detonated on impact, igniting a large quantity of oil contained within the bomb casing (sometimes mixed with phosphorus and also a rubber solution) which then scattered, burning furiously and adhering to any surface on contact. And again, it's highly probable that the New Church bomb only *partially* exploded, smothering the Lectern with material which did not ignite (remember that the Lectern was then positioned, as it had always been, on the right side of the church, near the pulpit).

The organ, standing some 75 feet from the bomb's probable impact, suffered relatively minor damage from blast, the organ console (behind the oak choir stalls on the south side) practically none at all.

So what happened to the magnificent organ in the New Church, one of London's finest and 'most notable' instruments?

It was decided to remove the instrument and store it in the Church Rooms in Defoe Road. This was a disastrous decision. As things turned out, it was never seen again in St. Mary's, and, some time later, was irretrievably lost.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

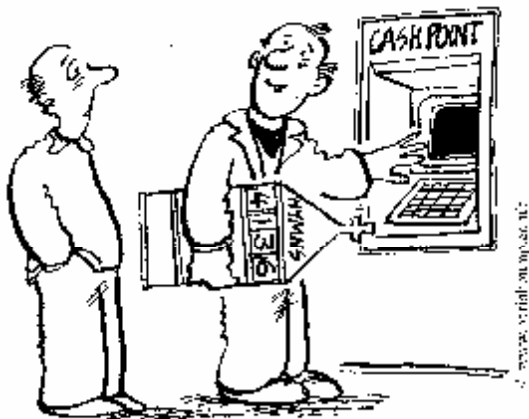
David Bell

### Gardening



Volunteers are needed once a month from April to November on a Saturday morning from 10 o'clock for a couple of hours, to mow the lawns and to tidy the grounds of the big church. We used to have three teams of eight people which made life easier, but last year we were down to two teams of five. Please sign up on the list at the back of the church or speak to either John Guest or Jeff Manning.

John Guest



...between you and me, it's the only way I can remember my PIN number!

**Here it is at last**, the first official New Prospect Caption Competition Star Prize. And what a prize it is, how could anyone not covet these adorable and strangely sporty religious classics.



These are nuns on the run, literally! It's always a little surprising to see nuns out of context, so the sight of a pair of nuns trundling across your desk in hot pursuit of one another is a real treat. Racing the nuns simply involves dragging them backwards to wind them up, and then letting them go.

The ultimate stress relief for the bored executive in your life.

#### Features:

- Set of 2 wind-up nuns.
- The Nuns are sporting the traditional black and white Habit, a Cross and a shocked expression.
- Made of PVC.
- Presented in an illustrated box with witty captions.
- Suitable for ages 8 years+

If you are not our lucky winner and you just can't live without your own set of speedy sisters they are available from Paperchase for the very reasonable price of £7.99  
Bargain!

Andrew Yoshiro

## Last Month's Caption Competition



Here's the picture just to remind you. Our adjudicator chose no. 1 as the winner. You know who you are – come and claim your smugness badge. The other entries (all excellent) are in no particular order.

As Mr Wonka took Billy's money from him, it crossed Billy's mind that this had better be bloody good chocolate. Breaking a Lenten vow is a sure-fire one-way ticket to hell!

Now look here sonny, I've told your mum time and time again – we **don't sell** tuppenny rice. Or treacle.

"Now, now Reginald. I tell you there are **NO** more Willy Wonka chocolate bars on sale. Now scram!"

Mr Postlethwaite wondered if the missing sherbet dabs were hidden in Peter's pockets!

"Let go me 'and Mister, or I'll grab yer Jammy Dodgers!"

As Mr Blenkinsop used his palmistry technique on Bobby, the little blighter couldn't help bursting into giggles at the tickling sensation"

George was surprised at the popularity of the "free short back and sides with every Mars Bar" offer.

Unable to go in the bar, David made a visit to the Tuck Shop to celebrate being elected Tory leader.

Mr Butterworth's usual smile became more of a fixed grin as he handed over the protection money.

"I see a tall dark stranger"

At times, thought Chuck, an older sister can be quite handy.

## Prize Caption Competition



**Your caption goes here.** Win our super new Star Prize. Entries can be given to any one of the magazine team. Closing date 20<sup>th</sup> April.

## Recipe

### Perfect Scrambled Eggs

Eggs  
Butter  
Salt and pepper

Allow 2 beaten eggs per person. Melt a largish knob of butter in a heavy bottomed saucepan and allow it to foam over the bottom of the pan without browning. Tip in the seasoned eggs and cook over a gentle heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon. As the eggs begin to set, remove from the heat and allow them to continue cooking in the residual heat while still stirring. Stir in a little more butter and serve with crusty bread or toast when set, but still shiny and moist.

Good things to stir into scrambled eggs are:  
Chopped chives or spring onions.  
Shredded, wilted and thoroughly drained spinach or chard.  
Chopped smoked salmon.  
Cream cheese with herbs.

*Mmmmm*

*Jane Pryce*

## Sudoku Puzzle

2	6	8				7	1	3
3		9		1		8	6	
1			6				2	
				3				
	9	5					3	
4					9			
		7	1	2				
	2			9	8	1		5
				5				6

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3 x 3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no maths involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic. Solution in next month's issue.

## Another Diary Date



St. George and the Dragon.

### 23 April - St George's Day circa 300 AD

The Saint of an English Army before he was Patron Saint of England, St George may have been a soldier, but he was no Englishman. He was an officer in the Roman army under Diocletian, who refused to abandon his faith during the Terror, and was martyred at Lydda in Palestine about the year 300 AD - supposedly 23 April. Over the years St George became the example of a Christian fighting-man, a powerful helper against evil powers affecting individual lives. He was the soldier-hero of the Middle Ages, of whom remarkable deeds were reported.

In the Golden Legend of the 13th century, Jacobus de Voragine gave St George a handsome write-up. The story runs thus:

One day, St George rode up to the heathen city of Sylene in Lybia, where he found the citizens in great distress. A neighbouring dragon had forced them to surrender two sheep each day for its dinner, and when the sheep gave out, two of their children; and now they were about to sacrifice the King's daughter, dressed as if for her wedding. St George encountered the little party by a stagnant lake, where the dragon lived, and persuaded the sobbing Princess to tell him why she was so miserable. At that moment the dragon appeared, looking inexpressibly revolting. The Saint charged, and drove his spear into the gaping mouth. To everyone's amazement, he tumbled the monster over and over.

Then St George borrowed the Princess' girdle, tied it round the dragon's neck, and persuaded her to lead it back to Sylene herself. The sight of her approaching with the befuddled dragon on its makeshift lead emptied the town. When the inhabitants timidly crept back, St George promised to behead the dragon if they would all believe in Jesus Christ and be baptised.

It was a most effective form of evangelism, for everybody said 'yes' at once. So 15,000 people were baptised, and four carts were commissioned to remove the dragon's body.

St George thus became a symbol of the war against evil, and is usually portrayed trampling the dragon of sin under his horse's hoofs. The Crusaders had a vision of him helping them against the Saracens at Antioch, during the first Crusade, and so brought the story of St George back with them from Palestine. Presently England put herself under the protection of the Saint. His day was declared a holiday in 1222. A red cross on a white field is the flag of St George.

*From "The Parish Pump"*

## Solution to March Sudoku

4	2	7	3	1	6	8	9	5
6	9	5	7	4	8	3	1	2
1	3	8	9	5	2	4	7	6
5	8	2	4	6	1	9	3	7
7	1	6	2	3	9	5	4	8
3	4	9	5	8	7	6	2	1
8	5	3	1	7	4	2	6	9
9	6	1	8	2	3	7	5	4
2	7	4	6	9	5	1	8	3

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**Parish Administrator**, and Verger, David Hammonds (Mon-Fri. 9.30-1 pm) (020 7254 6072 [stmarystokenewington@btinternet.com](mailto:stmarystokenewington@btinternet.com))

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**PCC Secretary**, Jean Guest (020 8802 4921).

**PCC Treasurer**, Michael Johnson **Sunday School**, Margaret Glover

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## **Parish Information for St John's**

**Church Wardens**, John Davis & Martha Christian

**Parish Office**, 020 8809 6111

## **Services**

### **Sunday**

Holy Communion 8 am Matins 9.30 am (Old Church) Sung Eucharist (St Mary's) 10.30 am  
Parish Eucharist (St John's) 11 am Evensong 6.30 pm (Old Church)

**Weekdays** (All at St Mary's except Thursdays)

	<b>Morning Prayer</b>	<b>Mass</b>	<b>Evening Prayer</b>
Monday	8:30 am, followed by	8:45 am	5 pm
Tuesday	8:30 am, followed by	8:45 am	5 pm
Wednesday	8:30 am	7.30 pm	5 pm
Thursday	8:30 am, followed by	8:45 am	5 pm
Friday	8:30 am, followed by	8:45 am	5 pm

**Brownies. Fridays 6.30 pm See Irene Powell after church**

**Booking enquiries for the Community Centre: see Parish Administrator**

**Arrangements for baptisms, weddings etc: ring the Parish administrator for an appointment.**

**St Mary's has a Church School: St Mary's School, Lordship Rd, London N16. 020 8800 2645**