

# New Prospect



The Parish Magazine of St Mary Stoke Newington

June 2006

50p please



## Get the bride to the church on time ...

... is every priest's prayer, just before a wedding. Fortunately so far we haven't had the ultimate nightmare, when one wedding runs so late that the guests are starting to arrive for the next one!

It was one of the couples who were getting married here in my first summer who were very keen on getting married in the Old Church. I soon discovered that as it is technically a Chapel of Ease, it isn't automatically registered for weddings, so I set the process under way of making it so. Unfortunately the process was too slow for that couple, but the licence duly arrived, and since then several couples have

most recently our very own Emma Dent (née Forrest) (see picture) on the Saturday of Easter Week.

It would be interesting to know (but difficult to find out, since we no longer have the registers) who were the last couple before these recent ones to marry in the Old Church; presumably it would have been during the time when the Old Church reverted to being the Parish Church, before the new Church was reopened after its war damage. I'm sure one of the historians out there would love to give us an article, or maybe there are some personal reminiscences?

*Jonathan Clark*

## 11 Days in the Life of a Curate...



### **Sunday**

Oh no, it's 7am already – time to catch a few minutes of the *Sunday Programme* before I tear myself away from my duvet. Zzz Zzz Zzz. Twenty minutes later, when I finally make it to the shower, I think about the PCC Away Day yesterday. Who, I wonder, will sign up for the working parties and groups? How will we take forward what we discussed? Must get onto convening new JPIC group soon. Breakfast and a few bits and bobs, and then off to Mattins. I'm on the 10.30 at St Mary's today and after the service, I pop into the 11-18's group to say 'hello' and introduce Val and Graham. Half a cider at the *Rose and Crown* and an amusing game of Jonathan Gebbie's mechanical nuns – mine was definitely the fastest! Drinks in the garden with Jonathan, the Area Dean and his wife, followed by lovely lunch. Start thinking about a sermon for next week – oh dear, the wine at lunch was a bad idea – read the chapter of the book we're looking at in theological discussion group tonight, make a few phone calls and do a bit of singing practice. Then off to Evensong and Discussion Group. Collapse on the sofa in front of a *Marple* with a cup of peppermint tea.

### **Monday**

Study Day – off to the British Library for 8 hours solid reading for my PhD, which is looking at how churches are engaging with

asylum seekers. Satisfyingly productive day! Some rather boring stuff on theological methodology (note to self: good cure for insomnia) and some far more interesting books on hospitality and the stranger. Still find it amazing to discover how much there is on welcoming the stranger in the Bible! Off to my new choir, *The Nonsuch Singers*, for rehearsal at 7. Hard music, but lovely people and great chill out time.

### **Tuesday**

Staff meeting after the Eucharist – supposed to be a short one, but still takes us 2 hours to cover everything! Pop into *North London Action for the Homeless* to say 'hello' and then call round to see someone who happened to be out. Decide to have lunch in my new garden, enjoying the gorgeous weather and the fact the grass is actually growing – a veritable miracle. I bask in the sun for a bit while reading a very detailed book on how to preside at the Eucharist – YAWN – I'm discovering that this is going to be a rather tricky business! Someone phones to cancel a home communion, so good opportunity to catch up on emails and phone calls. Then off to visit Isa and back to meet with Sue to talk about Christianity. At 6, I cycle off at speed to Post Ordination Training – a very useful session about being efficient and time management.

### **Wednesday**

Bliss – a quiet day today! Supervision first thing and Jonathan reassures me that I'm doing OK. Off to see Dick and Pauline Hensman with communion – it's lovely to catch up and hear all about their few months in Sri Lanka. Interesting landscaping of the car park going on at Millington House! Dropped by to see someone who's been a bit poorly, but she wasn't in – this seems to be a bit of a theme this week... Spend the afternoon working on my sermon for Evensong this Sunday about 'Faith and Politics' - I always find writing sermons a bit odd actually. Speaking at people for 15 minutes seems to assume I might have something to say that people would want to listen to! Have a quiet/prayer time and then off to the Hayward Gallery in the evening to see the new *Undercover Surrealism* exhibition and a meal with friends. Great fun, and found giant pictures of big toes very intriguing – mmm, I'm sure I can make a sermon out of that at some point...

### **Thursday**

Morning Prayer and Eucharist at St John's today, and then back to work on a talk/presentation I'm giving in Birmingham next weekend to some asylum seekers and those who support them – there's a residential I'm helping to lead at United College of the Ascension on 'Seeking Sanctuary'. The plan is to do an interactive biblical reflection on the stories of Abraham and Hagar! Lunch with Christine H in the park – lucky we got to the café early as the sunshine made it even more pramtastic than usual (to coin a phrase of Jen H), then off to singing lesson in Highbury and back to arrange some visits/home communions, sort out a cycle of prayer and work on my First Celebration of the Eucharist service sheet – what a mouthful, so 'FCE' from now on. Attempt to make Pimms for the staff meeting in the garden – Jonathan seemed to think I'd know how!?! – followed by a meal at the *Haikkun*.

### **Friday**

Day Off. Go for a run (note to self: need to do this more often). Tackle the dreaded cleaning and some washing in the morning and then meet up with a good friend for coffee. Buy some earrings from *Accessorise* with some vouchers and find myself musing – why is it that you always end up spending more than the amount on the vouchers? I've been sucked in. Mmmm. Eat some lettuce for lunch with a bit more mud in than I'd have liked – really should wash things properly – and then some relaxing pottering in the garden, bits of ironing, singing, catching up with family and friends and planning holidays/evening at jazz club on the phone. Early bed after some trashy TV, listening to a bit of music and a chapter or two of an Anthony Trollope I'm reading at the moment.

### **Saturday**

Ecumenical Pilgrimage to Bath. Am I really up at 6? Interesting places, but far too long on the coach for me if I'm honest – feeling decidedly green by the time we reach Downside Abbey. Meet friend who lives nearby for lunch and a bit of window shopping – first time I go into clothes shops wearing my collar. Even funnier looks than usual, the kind of ones that say, 'Amazing: clergy buy clothes!' On the way back, speak to the guy who's conducting the choir for the 'FCE' and try to finalise music and singers – bit

nervous about it really, hope it's all going to be OK. Arrive home at 9.15ish, off to bed.

### **Sunday**

I'm on Mattins today, so find some prayers and go over to set up around 9. Off to St John's with Martyn for the 11 o'clock service there and then we charge back to do the Confirmation Group, arriving 15 minutes late – oops. Great discussion about the church and decide a cake is the way to go for celebrating after the Confirmation Service – I think the vote was chocolate cake and icing. Lunch at 56 in Newington Green with friends and then back to tweak sermon for the evening and do a bit of admin stuff and sorting. Speak to Mum and Dad and practise music for choir tomorrow. Take Evensong and then home for a nice hot bath.

### **Monday**

Just like last Monday really.

### **Tuesday**

Staff meeting, then off to a seminar on asylum issues at Westminster Abbey. Very useful and important discussion about policy and some more horrific and eye-opening stories about refugees being held in detention and not having access to solicitors. A quick meeting with my PhD supervisor, then back to do lots of bits and bobs – expenses forms, practising presiding, phone calls, coming up with an idea for Ascension Day sermon, writing this article... cook a proper meal – fish and roasted vegetables – very impressed with myself!

### **Wednesday**

Did a bit of Mass Practice with Jonathan first thing – getting there – though learning these little mumbly prayers you say to yourself is going to take some time. Surprisingly helpful recent tip: pretend that you're milking mice when washing your hands in the bowl! Conversation about how to do a wedding and wedding visits, then off to see new Spiritual Director in Bow, which was easier said than done given the traffic – particularly when I managed to find myself in the Congestion Zone accidentally on the way back. Not a happy bunny. Traffic problems made me a bit late for a house blessing at Lloyd's up on Westbury Avenue – really enjoyed seeing his place and it was the first house blessing I'd done. Lots of water sprinkled everywhere, well, that is when I'd managed to work out how to get the water out of the sprinkler! We had a lovely chat and

ate walnut cake. Much happier bunny. Rushed back – still running late – to take communion to someone at home. Slightly frenzied catch up with phoning and emailing a few people, including arranging another visit to Betty Layward School and some pastoral things, then out for a visit in the evening... Finally, drink and chill out with a friend and then bed. Phew! Excitements of Deanery Chapter to look forward to tomorrow...

## **I was a stranger and you welcomed me ...**

At the PCC away day the other week, we began to think about whether we should have a parish mission statement. No, don't groan and turn on to the caption competition. Mission statements can be bland or cringy, but they can also be really good ways of saying something about what makes us distinctive, what's our particular mission.

We spent a while in silent prayer before celebrating the eucharist, which was maybe the reason that we really got somewhere. After we had looked at a variety of other parishes' statements, we began to talk about what we had to offer. One of the themes that came up strongly was that Stoke Newington contains such a variety of people, some here only for a little while, others for the long stay, some rich, some poor, from many different ethnic and social groups: and that we must offer the same quality of love and service to all those different groups, and witness to the fact that the body of Christ is for absolutely everyone. We also thought about the fact that people love coming into our churches, whether for concerts, just to look around, or often to pray – as well as coming for worship.

As we put together those two themes, we began to reflect on the idea of hospitality as one that might bring together what it is that we have to offer. Of course that can seem a passive idea, not very out-going, but we were reminded that hospitality in Christ's name is much more than waiting for people to turn up: it's about creating a space of welcome. And we also thought about the challenge involved in

welcoming strangers into our own space. In many ways it's much easier to go out and serve people somewhere else. When they come into one's own space they might start to make themselves at home, re-arrange the furniture, etc. I'm speaking metaphorically, but the point is that if we are to be truly welcoming, we will need to change in response to those we welcome.

So hospitality is a word to conjure with and to think about over the next few weeks. It fits very obviously into our plans for the Old Church; but maybe it's more even than that. The New Church is approaching the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of it's building in 2008: maybe this provides a key into how we should celebrate.

*Jonathan Clark*

### **Susie's Ordination Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2006**

This will be a big event in our calendar. We could have as many as 500 people there. The social committee are organising the drinks and nibbles for the occasion and we will need help, with setting up the tables and getting out the wine glasses and nibbles and also with the mammoth task of washing the glasses up. If you could spare some time to help we will be at the church from 2.30p.m. onwards, or just help after the service with serving the wine and then washing up, I would be very grateful. There will be a notice at the back of church for you to sign up.

Then, on the Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> June, after Susie's first Mass we will be having a **bring and share lunch**, if it is fine it will be in the Rectory garden, otherwise in the New Rooms. Bring something tasty to eat for sharing but you will need to bring your own drinks. The Rooms will be open from 9 a.m. on that morning so contributions for the lunch can be dropped off before the service begins.

Many thanks.

*Jean Guest*  
*Convenor Social Committee*

## St Mary's C of E Primary School

Although situated right in the middle of Stoke Newington Church Street, you can easily walk past the school without realising its there. Its jumble of buildings are quite well-concealed behind railings, and belie the powerhouse of learning that has developed there during the last few years. Despite a slight dip last year, the last three years' SAT's results have been outstanding, with the school coming first in the league tables in the London Borough of Hackney. They don't blow their own trumpet at St Mary's – they are too busy just getting on with it, and yet the school comes within the top 5% of top performing schools in Britain! That is a remarkable achievement by any standards, and one that children, parents, staff, and everyone at St Mary's can be proud.

There are many reasons that could be put forward for the school not being able to compete on a level playing field with other schools, such as the number of children receiving free school meals, those speaking English as an additional language, the high number from ethnic minority backgrounds, and so on, but these have not proved obstacles to the school's continual high performance. Despite their great record, the staff are far from complacent, and realise that the school is only as good as its last set of results, and that the hard work has to be kept up week by week for the high attainment to continue. Perhaps, most amazing of all is the way the school has bucked the national trend for boys from African and African Caribbean heritage to underachieve. At St Mary's they attain high results, and by the end of Year 6, are in an excellent position to make a great start when transferring to secondary schools. Before children transfer school they are given a questionnaire to complete about their experience at St Mary's. One of the comments that is repeated by many of the children is how they feel that the staff really care about them – surely one of the real markers of success?

Although small can be beautiful, where schools are concerned it can also raise all the problems faced by small businesses. St Mary's has a good community feel, and everyone is known to each other, but if one or more staff are ill, or there are 2 or 3 staff vacancies, this

can cause huge disruption in such a small school. Staff have to take on 3 or more areas of responsibilities, and senior staff often have to substitute for staff absences rather than getting on with their own tasks, which are then left to the end of the day. Ms Eleanor Taylor, the head-teacher, sometimes works way into the night to finish administrative tasks not completed in the day due to children and parents having top priority during school hours.

I was interested to know how the school manages to attain such excellent results, so I asked the head-teacher for her explanation. It seems that the approach is a holistic one, which embraces approaches to dealing with behaviour issues, caring for the children's welfare, and supporting the children's learning by providing booster classes and intervention programmes. There are other factors which may not appear to directly impact on learning, but which add to the children's enjoyment of school such as a wide range of after school clubs, music tuition and one to one support from Kids' Company, for children experiencing any personal difficulties. All of this helps to create an ethos in which the children feel valued as individuals.

These days school governors take a very active part in the running of a school, and as St Mary's is a church school, many of the governor's, including parent governors are from St Mary's congregation, with the Rector having recently taken over as Chair. Governors don't have a direct say in the teaching that goes on, but are involved in almost everything else, including: devising policy documents, staff appointments, budgets, looking after the fabric of the building and supporting the subject specialist teachers with their curriculum areas. So our joint task is to create a Christian ethos, with the children and their learning as the focus.

Recently, parents at the school decided that they wanted to support the school more fully by establishing a 'Friends of St Mary's Association', raising money by holding fund-raising events such as the special assembly for St Patrick's Day. Hopefully this new association will be a way of enabling everyone to pull together to support the children and staff at the school, raising much-needed funds, but most importantly, supporting the staff in developing the children's education. There was

an excellent turn out for the first meeting, with about 30 people attending a meeting in Defoe Road, all keen to offer their support.

The school is lucky enough to have a special worker whose responsibility is to develop the relationship between the school and parents/carers. Milton Dillon, the Parental Involvement Worker, was appointed 1 year ago, funded by the Learning Trust. He has made a valuable contribution so far, helping to bridge the gap between school and home, and creating that important sense of community that is needed for a successful school. He provides an excellent role model for the boys as well as impressing all of the children with his musical talent. With all of the changes taking place in education, it can sometimes be hard for parents to keep up with the latest trends, especially in maths and literacy, so it is good to have an intermediary who can explain what is going on, both in terms of the teaching and expectations about behaviour.

St Mary's School offers both a breakfast club and after school care, enabling working parents to drop their children off and pick them up at hours that fit in with the working day. There is also additional care offered by Kids' Company, an organisation that supports children who might be going through a difficult time, or who need additional emotional support. The school has managed to acquire the funding for this, ensuring that more vulnerable children are given support, and that problems don't interfere too much with their school work.

Parents who attend church have priority when it comes to places at St Mary's School, and as always, with a school that has such a good reputation, there are more applications than places available. The first priority is to members of the congregation, followed by other Christian families in the locality. Any remaining places are offered on a 'closest proximity' basis.

### **How can people at St Mary's Church support the school?**

Think about giving some of your time and become a governor (talk to the Rector)

Enrol your child at the school.

Support school events.

Share some of your expertise and arrange to talk/spend time with the children, providing them with a role model from their local community.

*Pamela Wadsworth*

## **A Letter From London Catholic Worker**

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*Thursday May 18<sup>th</sup> 2006*

Dear St Mary's Community Action Working Group,

Thank you for your support for our plans, and for agreeing to make us your Good Cause for the month.

After working together in various ways as a dispersed Christian community for five years now, we are last in a position to start a house of hospitality. Catholic Worker communities of hospitality and resistance are built around doing the 'works of mercy', and houses of hospitality as places in which to do the works of mercy.

After reflecting on our context here, we believe that the best way we can respond to the needs here, in the Catholic Worker tradition, is to run a 'Community Café' as part of our work of hospitality. In our vision, a community café is something of a cross between a café and a community centre, a provider of good food and a community meeting and gathering place. In combination with a residential community, this offers the possibility of an open, welcoming and easy to access homely environment. This is a response to the reality of the absence of community and of isolation, as well as the practical needs of individuals and families for good, healthy, attractive and nutritious food at an affordable price for people on low incomes. We will also find ways of serving those who cannot afford even that.

Our plan is to obtain a shop front somewhere in the area of the London Borough of Hackney from which to run the Community Café. Through the café work, we plan to build relationships and make contact with a wide range of people, with a mixture of needs and

gifts to offer. We plan to use the space, when not open as a café, for other community activities such as ESOL, art and craft sessions, advice sessions. We also hope to be able to offer the space to other groups to use for activities in harmony with the Catholic Worker aims and means, both local community groups and activist groups.

We are ideally looking for a shop with a flat above it and a basement below. The flat would house the residential community, as well as providing some accommodation for either destitute asylum seekers or destitute east Europeans. It may be possible to rent a flat separately. The basement would be used as an office, for storage, and for meetings and community activities. This will also serve as a base for our own organising and resistance activities. We also hope where necessary, to be able to advocate with and on behalf of the people we encounter, both through the café and any residents.

We will be relying on volunteers for our work, from our full-time residential community, from our own networks, and also from among local people.

Due to a couple of generous donations, we already have enough money to start and run for about two years. This is our 'launch fund', which we believe will give us the time to build up a wider community of friends who will support our life and work into the future. Our initial estimate is that we will need £24,000 a year in donations, so your offer is very much appreciated. We are really putting our trust in the providence of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so it is all the more encouraging to receive your support at this early stage.

I trust that this information is helpful. I am grateful for the opportunity to share our vision, hopes and plans with you. Hopefully this is a link of mutual friendship which can grow.

Yours in Christ

*Martin Newell cp (on behalf of the London Catholic Worker and the Open Table)*

## Saint Of The Month

### St Columba

*Feast Day – 9 June*



St Columba was born in County Donegal, in the northern part of Ireland, on 7 December 521. He was connected to the kings of Ireland through both his father Fedhlimidh and his mother Eithne. Ireland

was already a Christian country, and Columba was baptised in infancy. He seems to have been destined for the church from an early age, and studied in a number of monasteries throughout Ireland under several of the most famous teachers of the time. He was ordained as a deacon during his time at Molvile, where later legend already ascribed to him the ability to perform miracles. As a result of his training at Clonnard, where he was ordained as a priest, he became known as one of the Apostles of Ireland. During the 540s, he founded a number of monasteries in Ireland, notably those in Derry, Durrow and Kells.

In 563, however, Columba's life changed for ever. The reasons are disputed. The most dramatic story involves a purloined manuscript and lots of friends in high places. The story was that Columba had been given access to a particularly precious manuscript owned by St Finnian, who had been one of his teachers. Columba made a copy of it. Finnian was very angry, and demanded that Columba hand over the copy. Quite why either of them should have made such an issue of it is not clear; maybe it simply was that the value of the first had been reduced by being copied. Whatever either of them felt was at stake, Columba refused. Both appealed to the king, who ruled in favour of Finnian. A calf belongs with the cow, he said, and therefore the copy of the manuscript belonged with the original. Columba wasn't happy with this – after all, the copying would have entailed a great deal of labour on his part – and somehow the dispute escalated until a battle took place. During that fighting, 3000 people were killed. Columba was struck with remorse (a bit late, some might say) and

accepted from his confessor the penance of exile and the requirement to convert as many souls to Christianity as had been killed that day. Exile meant going somewhere where you could not even see your homeland.

Columba and 12 companions accordingly set sail in a coracle across the Irish Sea and in due course ended up among the islands off the west coast of Scotland. Here, on the island of Iona, he established himself. Iona belonged to the king of the southern Scottish kingdom of Dalriada and its king was some sort of kinsman of Columba's, who made the island over to him. The monks built themselves a monastery, on the Celtic pattern – a church and a refectory surrounded by small individual huts which formed the monks' cells. Southern Scotland was already a Christian country, at least nominally, having been converted by St Ninian, the teacher of one of Columba's early teachers. Iona became a great centre of learning and teaching, with, for example, the king's sons being educated there. Columba was an adviser to successive kings and generally moved in the highest circles of Dalriada. It was said by Bede that neither the king nor the people did anything without his consent. Nor was his banishment from Ireland permanent; at least once, in 570, he visited Ireland for a Synod, during which he spoke up for the order of Bards.

Most of Columba's missionary work was done among the northern peoples, the Picts, who had not been converted previously. He travelled up through the Great Glen to confront the king of the Picts in his stronghold at Inverness. The king had refused him entry to his fort, but when Columba appeared and made the sign of the cross outside, the bolts immediately drew back and the doors opened to welcome him. Among the miracles Columba was supposed to have performed in the Highlands was to force the Loch Ness Monster into obedience! There is now some dispute as to how much of the missionary work traditionally ascribed to Columba was carried out by him, and how much by others. There is no doubt, however, that he had a considerable impact on Christianity in Scotland.

Columba seemed to have been a generally larger than life figure – a multi-talented 'renaissance man' nearly a millennium before his time. His rule for his monks was that they

should divide their time between work, reading and prayer, and he kept his own rules faithfully. He was physically large, impetuous, even hot-tempered, as the story about the possible cause of his exile illustrates. At the same time, he was known for being humble and charitable, generous, warm-hearted and tender. He was also a great organiser and administrator. At the same time, he was an accomplished poet and copyist, and was reputed to have written 300 books in his lifetime. Three Latin poems attributed to him survive, as do two books – the Book of Durrow and a psalter called the Cathach. The network of monasteries he founded became famous for its scholarship, culminating in the mid eighth century with one of the greatest of all illuminated manuscripts, the Book of Kells. Most of the monasteries were in Scotland, but one of the most famous, Lindisfarne, was in Northumbria.

Iona was eventually taken over by the Benedictines, who preserved a monastery there until all monastic orders were suppressed in Scotland at the Reformation. The buildings fell into disrepair until they were restored by George Macleod, a church of Scotland minister who wanted to develop a new type of community which allowed for lay membership and a place of rest and refreshment for any who cared to come. Iona is one of the 'thin' places of earth, where the boundaries between earthly and spiritual life seem much weaker than normal.

Columba spent his time at Iona when he was not out on his missionary journeys, and the last four years of his life were spent there. As well as the administration of the monastery and the order, he devoted his time to reading and producing manuscripts. On 8<sup>th</sup> June 597, he paid a last visit to the highest point of the island to say farewell to it. That night, as the monks were gathering for Vespers, he died in the chapel, surrounded by his community.

Meanwhile, far away in the south of England, in the kingdom of the Jutes, an event was in train which was eventually to destroy Columba's distinctive form of monasticism in mainland Britain. An Italian monk, named Augustine, was reluctantly putting into effect Pope Gregory's plan for the conversion of the English. Roman Christianity was about to arrive.

*Judith Simpson*

## Day Trip to Lille April 2006



Late on Thursday my colleague asked me "do you and Steve fancy coming to Lille on Saturday by Eurostar, two people have dropped out"?

Quick checks that we knew where our passports were and alarms working well for quite an early morning start and we were planning our day. Neither Steve nor I had been on Eurostar before so quite an adventure.

Arriving at Waterloo at can I say an ungodly hour we spotted Sylvia and were joined by Jeff and Betty and then were in the midst of St Mary's group. A lively friendly group.

The journey was smooth, pleasant and relaxed and there we were in the Flanders countryside - and whoosh Lille International.

Some group photos, a "meet here at the designated time," and we were free to enjoy our unexpected "French leave".

By-passing the shopping centre we strolled along in the sunshine chatting and realising that lunch was what we wanted most.

We found the square we thought was there and found a table outside bathed in sunlight. And there we sat and relaxed and chatted and leisurely ate three courses and sufficient good wine, chosen very well by Jeff, really just enjoying being there and each other's company. Our company were Betty, Jeff, Sylvia, Gladys, Steve, and myself. It was so fine just sitting out in French sunshine (I don't care that it was equally sunny in London) and feeling the first warmth of spring whilst the conversation flowed. We talked of London, the Church, football, wine, and of course, French food. I did make one purchase that day, some sunscreen, which being so used to our cold

grey winter I hadn't thought I would need to take. Eventually we did move away from the square. Lille has many of the qualities of Northern European towns/cities; fine buildings, good independent shops, cafes, churches, museums ... and cobbles, so I was very glad I wore flat shoes.

We did visit two churches - including the Cathedral. Astoundingly beautiful stained glass I had forgotten I had admired before, real church candles and time and space to think of and recall those I light candles for, including those I can never see now.

Then off on a brisk walk back to the meeting place, a quick coffee/beer and time to board the train.

A smooth journey back to Waterloo and we were home by 8.30.

It was a very well organised trip but the good organisation was totally unobtrusive. Conversations I have heard told me these are serious committed Christians who carry with them a lightness of spirit.

What did I get from the day?

- Freedom to do my own thing
- A taste of France so easily reached
- A fun day out
- Good craic and company
- Made new friends
- Enhanced friendships
- Time to think about other trips to be made
- Reflected on deeper truths in private moments
- Spent a day doing something totally unexpected and adventurous

Thank you St. Mary's

*Jennifer Mann*



## THE NEW CHURCH ITS ORGANS, MUSIC AND SERVICES (8)

After the end of the war in 1945, rebuilding and reconstruction was agonizingly slow across the capital and, in some instances, took years to get started. Many bombed sites in London, for example, were simply tidied up and left as they were, to be dealt with later (the Barbican area, for example, was one of those which was not rebuilt until 1960). Money and materials, and sometimes manpower, were desperately short.

At St Mary's, the Old Church - with its northern side temporarily sealed off with tarpaulin sheeting and scaffolding after the bomb damage in 1940 - had become the 'acting' Parish Church with a full range of services, while across the road, the damaged New Church remained closed. Restoration of the two churches seemed a daunting task, and at one time it was thought that the New Church would never be repaired.

Nevertheless, a start was made in 1946 when a report was delivered to the Diocesan Reorganization Committee regarding the possible restoration of the New Church. The organ builders had visited the Defoe Road premises, and arrangements were to be made regarding 'salvage' and better storage of the organ elsewhere.

(The organ, of course, would have been fully insured. However, once war was declared, insurance policies had become literally worthless. Two years before the outbreak, the government had predicted that total devastation was a distinct possibility in cities, caused by intensive bombing from air attacks. Insurance companies were quick to realize that it would be impossible for them to honour their financial commitments and settle claims for damage on such an enormous scale. Payouts would therefore be made by an organization set up in 1940 and known as the War Damage Commission, and these would be settled after the war 'and not before'. And if possessions were moved and then stolen or looted from a damaged building rendered insecure, then would-be compensation would be even less. We shall see the significance of this later on).

By 1948 the organ had been relocated, and the hall was once again in use by the parish.

Sometime before the end of the war, the government had already requisitioned empty

properties for the purpose of storing furniture rescued from bombed buildings. Items could then be distributed to claimants who needed to be rehoused with no possessions of their own. We mention this here because a similar arrangement was made by the Diocese of London for parts of organs which had been taken from bombed churches, and an empty disused church was taken over for this purpose and used as a warehouse (what remained of the damaged organ from St. Mary's was probably stored there). Later, when bombed churches had been repaired, 'new' organs could then be built, using 'spare parts' from damaged instruments rescued from ruined churches. In this way, serviceable instruments could be provided reasonably simply, in which new parts and actions were kept to a minimum. For this reason, if for no other, many organs in London, newly installed in churches after the war, could rarely attempt to match the excellence of the pre-war instruments they replaced. 'Less good than the original' was often the assessment of critical organists on hearing reconstructed instruments. Many were purely functional, and certainly no more than that. In this respect, it has to be remembered that new materials of all kinds were in short supply for many years after the end of the war. Wood, for example, was licensed, and there were other government restrictions.

Meanwhile, in 1952, attention was drawn to the plight of the New Church, as rain had penetrated the roof and the temporary covering of the damaged transept. 'The matter was to be gone into very thoroughly by an architect and consideration would be also be given to restoration'. However, the rebuilding of the Old Church was practically under way, and one of its principal features was the removal of the organ from the west gallery to a new site at the east end of the church, together with a new organ case designed by the architect (the gallery at the west end was then drastically reduced in size). A service of Re-Dedication was held on Sunday, 1st March 1953.

One year later the parish AGM was told that 'the architect had been in contact with the Rector regarding permanent repairs to the fabric of the New Church. Work would begin this year (1954).' (To be continued)

*David Bell*

## Book Review

*Attention All Shipping*, by Charlie Connelly,  
published by Abacus, priced £8.99

This book is one of those ideas that we wish we had all thought of. The author, who I had never heard of but who has also written a book about football and is a sports and travel writer, gets to thinking one night about the history of seafaring in his family. Then he starts thinking about the shipping forecast, how vital it is to sailors and seafaring communities, and has a cunning idea; why not visit all the places that are featured in the shipping forecast and write about them and the forecast's importance to them?

He aims to do so in a year. Along the way he duly visits or passes through everywhere mentioned in the Radio 4 essential. Some are just plain odd but many are fascinating, with moving histories and people with many interesting stories to tell. His time on Shetland and the Faroes I particularly enjoyed, but all the history and local colour is very enjoyable.

However, I found Connelly's writing style irritating in the extreme. There are many modern books that take a humorous interest or quirk of the (usually male, and don't tell me that is a coincidence) writer, such as the self explanatory *Round Ireland With a Fridge* or *French Revolutions*, about cycling the Tour de France route. But in my opinion he takes the 'look at me I am doing something wacky' thing too far and his constant mick-taking really grated on my nerves. I'm afraid I often skipped over paragraphs of gag telling.

Connelly is often rightly humbled by the tales of incredible bravery or suffering that he comes across, but this only mellows the tone for about five minutes before he sets off being 'funny' again.

The actual travel writing and social histories included in *Attention All Shipping* are well worth reading and I am not surprised that it was a Radio 4 book of the week; apart from the obvious, much of it reads like a radio programme.

It has also alerted me to two other lovely sounding books about the shipping forecast; one a collection of paintings of the locations, and the other of photographs of them. And I

admit that I do like the sound of Connelly's next book, which is about Elvis.

But in this case, stick to the story telling and avoid the jokes.

Emma Dent

## Caption Competition Prize

If you are anything like me you will be one of those people who are always falling foul of those daily faux pa's and errors of judgement that fall into the minor sin category, of course it's just not fair to burden the clergy with every tiny infraction, and it's very difficult to file each and every one away until the formal act of confession. Well now there is the perfect thing for just such occasions...Wash Your Sins Away Moist Towelettes.

So if you just can't wait to dispense of your sins? Carry a few antibacterial, sin-killing moist towelettes with you. Wipe sins away the instant they occur. No more waiting...Hurrah!



If you are not lucky enough to win our competition, and you just have to have these little gems, then you can get them online for the bargain price of \$5.00 from [www.evolvefish.com](http://www.evolvefish.com) plus they stock the full range of Wash Away Your Sins products, perfect for any occasion.

Andrew Yoshiro

## Blog-Collar Review

In the last few years there has been a massive increase in the number of blogs, or online diaries, that can be found. Fuelled by cheap technology and access to the Internet, there are loads of them, covering every walk of life from a Tory MP to an NHS manager.

They can be an ingenious way of allowing people in restricted or dangerous environments (see Baghdad blogger Salam Pax, <http://dear-raed.blogspot.com/>) to talk to the outside world and be contacted back, for the thing about a blog is that people who read it can post comments and contact the blog author. I am told that in technology mad South Korea they are now a more popular way of contacting friends than emailing.

However, they can also be little more than a rather self-indulgent rant/long and drawn out discussion. I think bloggers sometimes forget that entries should probably not be any longer than the average diary entry of anyone but a self-indulgent teenager or a cabinet minister with an eye to publishing said tomes.

A bit of a hunt reveals a mix of blogs written by priests. Intriguingly a large proportion of these serving ministers appear to be from the Church of Scotland, for reasons which currently escape me.

In addition to often categorising their entries and sorting them by date, most bloggers put a bit of information about themselves on their sites; who they are, where they are from, favourite music, name of pet and so on. Gadget vicar (<http://gadgetvicar.typepad.com/>) is based in Glasgow, is currently listening to Snow Patrol and Embrace – on this I will reserve comment – and reading ‘or trying to finish’, as he puts it books by Bernard Cornwell and Brian McLaren. His site currently includes regular updates and ‘prayer points’ on the condition of the mother of old friends and parishioners who has been badly hurt in a car accident. Generally, it is a kind of diary; he seems to get out and about a lot on church business and also comments on issues in the wider Anglican church. Despite his nickname there is thankfully not too much talk about computer hardware or the like.

In <http://blog.garethjmsaunders.co.uk/>, Or View From The Potting Shed, there is rather a

lot of techie talk. Unsurprising I suppose, as its author is a university web manager as well as being a priest in the Scottish Episcopal Church. I’m afraid that as the main and very long piece on his site at the time of writing was about the life and times of the heavy metal band Anthrax, I got bored and moved onto <http://simontsays.blogspot.com/> which is the blog of a chap called, you’ve guessed it, Simon. A priest in Bristol, his site is quite slow to upload but is more my type of blog thing, with random photos taken through spyholes and of kites being flown, and comments on news items and things he has done, like realising he has to change his preaching style to adapt to a new job with a large church building. He also, along with many other bloggers, recommends other blogs that he reads, which led me to On a Latte and a Prayer (<http://www.penandinc.org/>) because I liked the name. I also liked the stylised and rather girlie look of this site but it was pretty hard to work out much about the author, except that she is married and a teacher. I did work out though that she was American, which does not suit the purposes of this article.

So moving on I moved on to the blog of a female Anglican priest, <http://maggidawn.typepad.com/>, who is quite well known and is the author of several books. Her entries are a mixture of quick comments and long, meditative observations on what it is to never have enough time, Mother’s Day and do mobile phones ruin family life. Some of them are a bit long but I quite enjoyed them.

Should your curiosity be aroused, also give these a try; two church blogs <http://www.holyspirit-clapham.org.uk/blog/> and <http://thinkinganglicans.org.uk/>, a blogging Archbishop (<http://www.bishopdavid.net/>) and of a Methodist minister at <http://cybervicar.blogspot.com/>

*Emma Dent*

## Last Month's Caption Competition



Here's the picture just to remind you. Our adjudicator chose no. 1 as the winner. You have won the "Testamints"! The other (excellent) entries are in not in any particular order.

Marjorie could only look on in horror as she realised guests were gathering round the piano for a sing song

Henrietta's girdle was killing her! ....she wondered how Victorian women must have coped with their bustles!

Someone had helped themselves generously to the *Sullivan Powells*, but Dolores decided not to make an issue of it.

Well Martha, I can't help it if you didn't *mean* to put your "special cigarettes" in there.

Myrtle glanced briefly around the room as she offered the poisoned chocolates to her rival.

Come on now all of you...who has pinched all the cheesy wotsits?

Pandora realised someone had opened the box.

Being a cigarette girl has ruined my renditions of 'I'm A Little Teapot' said Dolores.

If I stand very still, perhaps no one will notice this skirt is too tight for me to move in, thought Ava.

Some people say that Botox makes you look like a 'rabbit in the headlights', but I think my smile looks really natural, don't you Mother?

But we *a/ways* take communion like this round here.

I can't believe she wants another cigar; there's no pleasing some people!"

## Prize Caption Competition



**Your caption goes here.** Win our super new Star Prize as featured on page 11. Entries can be given to any one of the magazine team. Closing date 20<sup>th</sup> June.

## SUDOKU PUZZLE

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

# Stewardship Supper Photo Gallery



*Groaning boards at Abney Hall*



*Rogues gallery?*



*Our Very Social Working Party*



*Katherine, Susie and Thomas – what have they been drinking?*



*Martyn's glass appears to be empty*



*Oh yes, we know how to have fun at St Mary's!*

## A Poem for June

### Adlestrop

Edward Thomas 1878 – 1917

Yes. I remember Adlestrop –  
The name, because one afternoon  
Of heat the express-train drew up there  
Unwontedly. It was late June.

The steam hissed. Someone cleared his  
throat.

No one left and no one came  
On the bare platform. What I saw  
Was Adlestrop – only the name

And willows, willow-herb, and grass,  
And meadowsweet, and haycocks dry,  
No whit less still and lonely fair  
Than the high cloudlets in the sky.

And for that minute a blackbird sang  
Close by, and round him, mistier,  
Farther and farther, all the birds  
Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.



Edward Thomas was born in London, the son of a Welsh civil servant. He was educated at Battersea Grammar School, St Paul's School, and Lincoln College, Oxford; where he studied history.

In 1915, although married with two children, he felt unable to "sit out" the war, and enlisted as a private with the Artists Rifles. The following year he was made a junior officer and was transferred to the Royal Artillery. He was killed in action at Arras on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 1917. He is commemorated in Poets Corner at Westminster Abbey.



Algernon was a whiz at working  
the new automated hymn board.

### Next Month:

The **Hymn-writer** returns, we have more from Ellen Kenny on Guatamala, and - of course, Susie's ordination and the attendant festivities.

Our **Book Review** will be "Something For Reading On The Beach", Emma's **Website Review** might be a little shocking (but all in good fun) – and who knows what other "seasonal items" will turn up by that time!

Many of you will be going away on holiday – perhaps you could consider writing a review of a place visited for our September issue.

Copy date for the July/August issue is 20<sup>th</sup> June. And for the travel-writers, the copy date for the September issue is 20<sup>th</sup> August – so you've got plenty of time!



*I have to say - I think he's taking this rosepipe ban a bit too seriously!*

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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**