

From the Riverbank Magazine



for

St Thomas of Canterbury Church
in Goring-on-Thames,
St Mary's Church in Streatley and
St Andrew's Church in South Stoke

March 2012 - 12th edition



St Mary's Barn Dance



Photo by Derrick Lello



Photo by Adrian Turner

Despite the snow falling outside, the atmosphere in the Morrell Room was warm and welcoming for St Mary's Barn Dance on February 4th. Guests were greeted with a glass of Kir Royale and the

lovely sight of fairy lights twinkling on the supper tables, beautifully decorated by Rebecca Joisce and Sue Melsher.

Everyone then enjoyed a plentiful buffet supper, and the surprise presentation of a birthday cake (made by Alison Gray) to Alicia Condie, who was celebrating her eighth birthday that day. During coffee, the tables were pushed back and the real business of the evening could begin. And the lively music, provided so ably by Ted and Pat Morse and Kate Apley was so infectious that even the self-confessed non-dancers were soon on their feet enjoying learning new dances and the camaraderie that folk dancing always engenders.

Thanks must go to organizer Alison Gray and her helpers for not only providing us all with a really fun evening, but also for the useful contribution to church funds that the event raised.

 **Mary Scriven**

(Editor's note: Really delicious food it was too! Thank you to everyone, including Mary, who kindly volunteered to cook for everyone that evening).

□ Pastoral letter:

Christ reigns. O.K!

Ever since Elijah feared for his life, we have been warned of the imminent demise of religion. "I am the only one left," bewailed the prophet, "and they are seeking my life to take it away!" Well, we are still here; and without wanting to be either complacent or triumphalist about it, we intend to stay.

About 40 years ago I gave a hitch-hiking soldier a lift to his barracks. We enjoyed a long and friendly conversation on our journey. We spoke about the military life and also about my own calling. He hadn't spoken to a vicar before and admitted to having his own preconceptions of my work. "*As I see it, it is now, unfortunately, a dying trade*", he observed. He might have been influenced then by certain new and popular satirical programmes on television; even popular newspaper articles on such subjects as "the death of God". After all these years, I wonder if that soldier is still alive. In the meantime, the number of army personnel has dramatically diminished; and yes, church congregations have got smaller, too. But we Christians are still here!

At the time of writing this note, we are preparing to embark on our Lent course, "*Handing on the Torch*" – that is, a message to a new generation of Christian people. The message has to be coherent and strong; and the Church will inevitably be somewhat different to the one that I knew in the '50s and '60s. There has to be change; and any mutation for survival is bound to be painful. That evolution is gradual. Sometimes it needs to be spectacular! This year we participants will not be exercised so much about what we do and say within the tent - that is, the conventional Church -

contd...

but taking a hard look at what is really going on, outside. And why should we be doing this? Because this is the real world, the one that God loves. This is the society to which we belong and whose problems, in the name of Christ, we need to address. It is going to be another journey, a little longer than the other but, no doubt, just as friendly and perhaps just as memorable.

As the old posters used to tell us: "Christ reigns. O.K!"



Rev. Leighton Thomas

The Children's Society Box Collection 2011



The boxholders of St Mary's managed to collect £1,427 last year which is another excellent total. The donation was augmented by a 'lasagne lunch' in November and 'game lunches' in January and February this year **bringing the total to £2,054**. Thank you to all who collected and ate for the benefit of children.

Sadly, our total was down a little from last year, just when extra funding is needed as the Government cutbacks bite. I have managed to find some new boxholders to replace those good people who collected for many years so let's hope this year's collection will swell. £1 a week in the box enables a very unhappy teenager receive a little professional counselling to try and sort out seemingly insurmountable problems.

In today's world we carry much less cash than we did and I think this affects the collections. Nevertheless please carry on picking up stray money or putting aside a certain amount each week or selling your own produce. Do contact me through the website email (webcontent.thomandmary@gmail.com) if you

would like to join the band of forty or so collectors.

I believe all children have a right to a good childhood and so many are born into circumstances where this is not the case. The Children's Society helps by providing kindness and professional advice to help young people make something of their lives. Your collection helps this work to continue.

Thank you once again.

 **Rhona Bell**

Matins at St Mary's: a revision of Order of Service



On Sunday 11 March, a gently modified and slightly shorter version of the Matins service, as approved by the PCC, will be introduced. The service is taken from 'The Shorter Prayer Book', being 'an abbreviated form of the Book of Common Prayer with some additional matter.' It has the approval of the Bishops and Archbishops of the Provinces of Canterbury and York. The stated purpose of the book is, 'to provide for congregational use an Edition of the Book of Common Prayer limited to the parts most often required, simplified in arrangement and generally made easier to follow.' With a few exceptions, the language is the same as in the Book of Common Prayer and will sound totally familiar. Bath Abbey uses the Shorter Prayer Book for BCP Choral Matins every Sunday.

This is not change for change sake; the service is a little shorter while retaining the same essential content and character. In the surveys conducted at St Mary's as part of our Church Growth project, one of the identified areas for improvement expressed by a very high percentage of the congregation was keeping the length of services to a

reasonable minimum – certainly within an hour. Depending on the length of the sermon, hymns and prayers of intercession, Matins has had a tendency to run over the desired hour. The opinions expressed by St Mary’s congregation were strongly supported by the recommendations of LYCIG (Leading Your Church Into Growth). An additional benefit is that the version of BCP Matins we are adopting, whilst retaining all the essential character of the service, avoids some of the less accessible language and is a little more understandable to the uninitiated attendee.

The clergy, or leader if a member of the laity, will retain the prerogative of modifying the Order of Service for any particular service. This is, of course, within usual practice. Quoting from the LYCIG Course in its section on User Friendly Worship, “‘Common Prayer’ does not in fact exist in the sense of being able to walk in to any church in the land and find exactly the same words to follow. To accept a variety of forms, dictated by local culture is part of our Anglican heritage, spelt out by Cranmer in his 1549 preface, ‘It often chanceth diversely in diverse counties’.” Patterns for Worship CIIP.

 **Derrick Lello**

St Mary’s Annual Vestry and Annual Parochial Church Meetings: Sunday 1 April at noon

Please put the date of these meetings in your diary. There will be two vacancies for the positions of churchwardens and either two or three for lay members of the PCC. Deanery Synod members may be elected from the PCC.

If you are interested in finding out more about what is involved for any of these positions, please contact Rev. Mark

Blamey for churchwarden positions and any member of the PCC for the other roles.

 Alison Gray

St Thomas of Canterbury Church



Church Tower Fund

St Thomas' Flower Arrangers
invite you to

*POETRY AND SUPPER BY
CANDLELIGHT*

Saturday, 17 March, 2012
7.00 pm

in The Canterbury Room
St Thomas of Canterbury
Goring on Thames
Tickets: £12.50
including a 2 Course Supper
and a glass of wine
from Inspiration, St Tom's after Sunday
Service & Rue Morton 871882

☐ Posy Factory for Mothering Sunday



Please come along and help make Mothering Sunday posies on **Saturday 17 March between 10.30am and 11.30am in the Canterbury Room of St Thomas' Church**, so that we'll have lots of beautiful posies to give away during the St Thomas' service the following day. All ages very welcome.

Offers of foliage for the posies would also be gratefully received. Please call me on 871970.

 **Rev. Luci Heyn, Curate**

☐ Charitable Giving at St Thomas':



11 March: SeeSaw helps children and their families both before and after suffering a major bereavement in their lives, helping them to move forward and face the future with hope. Please give generously.

St Andrew's Church

☐ Ilfracombe Male Voice Choir



**Saturday 25 February
Concert at
St Andrew's Church**

Doors will open at
7.30pm: the concert
beginning promptly at

8.00pm. Ticket price is £10. There will be soft drinks, wine and beer available before the performance and during the interval. Tickets available from me (873897) or the web editor webcontent.thomandmary@gmail.com

Proceeds from the evening will be for the alterations taking place in the church including the installation of a toilet. On the evening, the primary school next door has kindly offered to open for the use of their toilet facilities.

 **Robert Small**

Exhibition - Stations of the Cross



©Robin Stemp

There will be an exhibition of computer painted images by Robin Stemp at St Andrew's on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, 5th & 6th April, from 10.00am to 4.00pm.

Refreshments will be available and any donations will be put towards the St Andrew's Development Fund.

Please come. These are very powerful, reflective, thought-provoking images.

 **Sally Baker**

(Editor's note: Robin's work is also available for sale. Please direct any enquiries to Sally Baker, Assistant Treasurer at St Andrew's or via the web email address: webcontent.thomandmary@gmail.com).

The United Benefice

☐ Words of Encouragement



Last month I wrote about starting a group to write notes and cards to persecuted Christians around the world. The first meeting of the group will take place on **Wednesday 14 March** in the Canterbury Room from 10.00 to 11.00am. We will look at some case histories and guidelines, then write our messages. If you have any postcards or notelets that you can spare, please bring them along.

Do join us if you can. This is something practical we can do and it will make a difference.



Judith Aguda, LLM

☐ A short appreciation of Edith Nixon who died on Sunday 5 February, a month short of her 101st birthday



Edith was born on March 7th 1911 in Derby, and brought up in Kensington, Liverpool. She had two sisters and two brothers. Their father, George Hughes, ran an Ironmonger's. Alan, her brother had a friend, Frank Nixon, who would visit; it soon became obvious it was Edith he was coming to see rather than Alan!

Edith and Frank were married in the Parish Church on 25th July 1937 at the ages of 26 and 27. Frank was an engineer and they moved to wherever work was to be found. Frank served at sea between 1931 and 1935 and again from 1944 to 1946. During 1940 they were living in Coventry and

would cycle every night to a farmhouse outside the city for safety. They returned one morning to find their house and the two on either side, a heap of rubble. The family has an original birth and marriage certificate but almost nothing else survived from before that time. While Frank was crossing the Atlantic on oil tankers, Edith's war work was as a telephonist, an occupation she did not enjoy!

The war ended, they moved to Wolverhampton and Phillip was born. The next move was to Shirley near Birmingham, where Edith lived for the next forty-two years. She devoted herself to her family, became a faithful member of Shirley Methodist Church and a life long supporter of The Leprosy Mission. Frank died in 1972.

At the age of 65 Edith travelled to Auckland, New Zealand on her own, to stay with Phillip and Hilary for six months. While there her first grandchild was born.

In 1991 Edith moved to Goring to be nearer her family to which she was devoted - Phillip and Hilary, Matthew, Gillian, Claire and Daniel. She was very much part of the worship life of St Thomas and, with her presence and help, supported the many and varied activities of the time. Edith was a familiar and well loved figure around the village, where she would shop and do errands for the 'older folk' living around her! Edith walked everywhere right up until 2004 when she moved to Nazareth House in Northampton, once again to be near Phillip and Hilary. She was happy there and felt at home; it was after enjoying her lunch on Sunday 5 February that she slipped peacefully away.

Edith's funeral took place on February 13th at St James, Northampton and is buried in Dallington cemetery, just a short distance from Nazareth House. It was fitting that Elizabeth Ainsworth joined John and me to support Hilary, Phillip and their family and to represent all those in this place who knew and respected Edith.

 **Rev. Liz Dowding**

Day time small group

We are moving our small group, known as a Faith Group, to the day time to make it more accessible for those who, for various reasons (baby-sitting issues, difficulty in going out at night etc) prefer to meet during the day. We will meet on alternate **Mondays** from **1.30 – 3.00pm**, usually at “Oakleigh House”, 4 Wallingford Rd, for Bible Study, fellowship and prayer.

The Monday Faith Group will meet for the summer term on April 16 and 30, May 14 and 28, June 11 and 25, July 9 and 23. Contact me on 872252 for any more details.

 **Sue Hookway**

United Benefice outing to Wintershall on Thursday 21 June

Some places remain for this outing and will be on sale throughout March. Flyers and booking forms are still available in the churches and, in addition, at “Inspirations”. From the beginning of March, we will also be advertising in the other churches in the Goring Gap, and in the next issue of Goring Gap News. So, do sign up as soon as you can.

If you are concerned with practical details (availability of toilets, distances to walk, food outlets, etc.) do ask Rev. Luci Heyn (871970) who has attended three times and thoroughly enjoyed it.

 **Ian Wallace, LLM (871459)**

Women’s World Day of Prayer



Don’t forget this ecumenical event on **Friday 2 March** at 1.30pm at St Thomas of Canterbury Church. Refreshments and crèche available. The service lasts an hour and this year is devised by Malaysian women. The theme is ‘*Let Justice Prevail*’.

*Mothering Sunday services
in the United Benefice*



Sunday 18 March 2012

*10.00am Parish Communion for Mothering Sunday
at St Thomas', Goring*

*10.30am Family Service for Mothering Sunday
at St Mary's, Streatley*

*10.30am Family Service for Mothering Sunday
at St Andrew's, South Stoke*

Easter Services across the United Benefice



Sunday 1 April - Palm Sunday

St Thomas', Goring 10.00 Family
Service: 'We have a king who rides a donkey'

St Mary's, Streatley	10.30	Parish Communion with Palm Procession
St Andrew's, South Stoke	10.30	Holy Communion, Book of Common Prayer
St Thomas', Goring	16.00	Evensong including the reading of the Passion story

Monday 2 April

St Thomas', Goring	19.30	Sung United Benefice (UB) Compline*
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Tuesday 3 April

St Mary's, Streatley	19.30	Sung UB Compline
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Wednesday 4 April



St Thomas', Goring 19.30 A chance to explore the meaning of the crucifixion and resurrection with DVD, discussion and refreshments, followed by –

21.00 Said UB Compline

Thursday 5 April – Maundy Thursday

St Andrew's, South Stoke	All day	'Stations of the Cross' Digital art image exhibition
St Mary's, Streatley	19.30	UB Holy Communion and Easter Vigil, including foot washing

Friday 6 April – Good Friday



St Andrew's, South Stoke	All day	'Stations of the Cross' Digital art image exhibition
St Thomas', Goring	10.00	Deton8! UB children's Easter event
St Andrew's, South Stoke	12.00	The First Hour **
St Mary's, Streatley	13.00	The Second Hour
St Thomas', Goring	14.00	The Last Hour, including Maunder's Penitence, Peace and Pardon Cantata
Goring Lock	15.10	UB Good Friday Witness
St Andrew's, South Stoke	19.30	Sung UB Compline

Saturday 7 April – Easter Eve

St Mary's, Streatley 19.30 UB Easter Vigil – Everyone is invited. Generally this service is known as the first official celebration of Easter as, historically, each day began at sunset – that means Easter begins on Easter Eve. The Easter Vigil is divided into four parts:

- Firstly, comes the Service of the Light, in which the Easter Candle is lit from a bonfire outside St Mary's Church, and is carried inside where the Easter Blessing, known as the 'Exsultet,' is sung or said
- Secondly, selections of Bible readings follow, which focus on the mighty works of God in creation and stories of the liberation of God's people

- Thirdly, the renewing of baptismal vows, recalling a time in the early church when candidates were brought forward for baptism and confirmation at Easter, having received instruction through Lent
- Finally, the first Eucharist of Easter is celebrated.

Sunday 8 April – Easter Day

Lardon Chase, Streatley 06.00
 UB Daybreak Eucharist followed
 by bacon rolls in the Morrell
 Room, Streatley



St Mary's, Streatley	08.00	UB Holy Communion, Book of Common Prayer
St Thomas', Goring	10.00	Parish Communion for Easter Day
St Mary's, Streatley	10.30	Parish Communion for Easter Day
St Andrew's, South Stoke	10.30	Holy Communion for Easter Day, Book of Common Prayer

* Compline is based on the last monastic service of the day, traditionally followed by entering into The Greater Silence which would be kept throughout the night. The service can be said or sung.

** First, Second and Last Hours – each service provides readings, reflections and times of silence marking the three hours in which Jesus' suffered on the cross.

 **Rev. Luci Heyn**

Important events for your diary



Canon Olivia Graham is preaching on Sunday 29

April at 10.30am United Benefice service at St Mary's Church, Streatley on '**Discerning God's vision**'. Canon Olivia Graham is Parish Development Adviser in the Oxford archdeaconry and specialises in the field of spirituality. Her preaching follows the sermon of Rev. Dr Michael Beasley, which was recorded and you can now hear it on the Benefice website if you missed it in person.



Please put **Saturday 9 June** in your diary as a **United Benefice half day meeting, on the subject of 'Vision'**. The half day will run from 10.30am to

2.00pm. (It will begin shortly after 'Men and Work', which runs from 8.15-9.30am). I suggest a bring and share lunch. The venue will be The Canterbury Room. Everyone is welcome.

 **Rev. Mark Blamey, Vicar**

Calling all Carers



Sixteen carers met together on 16 February to hear Claire Wormold from South & Vale Carers Centre. Claire gave us very comprehensive information about the payments we could receive, if eligible. Due to government cutbacks, this very supportive centre does not receive any funding, and we hope that enough funds can be raised in order for its work to continue.

The next two meetings - **19th April and 21st June** - will take place in the **Community Centre's dining room commencing at 11.00am**. It is hoped to make this our regular meeting place. Everyone is welcome. Any queries, please phone me on 874227. On Thursday 19 April, Fiona McPherson, the Outreach Worker from Carers Oxfordshire will be the speaker. All are welcome.



Pat Nias

Greenbelt 2012: 'Saving Paradise' A 'Taster' day-trip on Saturday 25 August



Greenbelt is a festival with a difference, with its mission to create spaces where art, faith and justice collide.

Taking place over the August Bank Holiday weekend (24-27 August 2012) at Cheltenham Racecourse, Greenbelt hosts a rich programme of music, visual and performing arts, spirituality, comedy, talks and discussion. The diversity of content not only demonstrates Greenbelt's commitment to the arts, faith and justice, but also our underlying values of tolerance, dialogue and hope. The festival has been in existence for 37 years and is firmly rooted within a Christian tradition which is world-affirming, politically and culturally engaged.

If you'd like to experience Greenbelt why not join me for a day trip on **Saturday 25 August**? For further details please contact me on 871970 and visit Greenbelt's website www.greenbelt.org.uk. Day ticket prices are yet to be released.

 **Rev. Luci Heyn**

The Liturgical Calendar



4 Mar: 2nd Sunday of Lent

11 Mar: 3rd Sunday of Lent

18 Mar: 4th Sunday of Lent and Mothering Sunday

25 Mar: 5th Sunday of Lent

Monthly green tip:

Although we are in Lent, in no time at all we will be planning to buy our Easter eggs. So please consider buying ethical ones made from Fairtrade chocolate: the only way we can be assured the cocoa farmer hasn't been poorly treated.



‘Most people I know wish, at least at certain points in their lives, that they had more faith. I know of people who torment themselves over having too little of it. They are certain that their lack of faith is the reason for an unanswered prayer, for spiritual weakness, or for a sense of distance from God...’

‘When people wrestle with doubt, they may tell themselves that they will try harder to have more faith. But faith is not the sort of thing that can be acquired by trying harder...**Never try to have more faith – just get to know God better.** And because God is faithful, the better you know him, the more you’ll trust him.’ (pg 81-2)

John Ortberg (2001) *If You Want to Walk on Water, You’ve Got to Get Out of the Boat Michigan, USA*



Like a parent at a child's school performance, the love of Jesus is such that he is the very last one standing and clapping *for you* when everyone else has sat down.

Biblical quote:



'For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide, we might have hope.'

Romans 15:4

Contact the Vicar, Rev. Mark Blamey



01491 873128 or



vicar.thomandmary@gmail.com



United Benefice Church website:

www.st-thomas-goring.org.uk

www.st-marys-streatley.org.uk

www.st-andrews-southstoke.org.uk



Copy deadline for *From the Riverbank* is the 17th of each month: webcontent.thomandmary@gmail.com