



Notes from the Riverbank

The newsletter for St Thomas of Canterbury Church in Goring,
St Mary's Church in Streatley and St Andrew's Church in South Stoke

July/August 2016 – 30th edition

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● Welcome to the thirtieth edition of "Notes from the Riverbank."

All contributions should be sent to Toria, the editor, by the 17th of each month at the usual email address webcontent.thomandmary@gmail.com. The on-line versions of the calendars are maintained by Glenn Cooke using the same email address. Bookings for the church or Canterbury Room should be made by contacting the UB Parish Secretary Jenny Hall at jandjh2@btinternet.com. We aim to produce the on-line and printed versions of each issue by the 25th of each month.



Pastoral Letter: Stop the world I want to get off!

"Stop the world I want to get off!" A phrase frequently used in the sixties when life was getting too busy or almost out of control. It came from a popular musical of the same name, first staged in London then America. There was a revival in the eighties, but the story line didn't have quite the same resonance with audiences and it flopped.

I was reminded of the phrase after spending a couple of days in the north of England recently, in Northumberland near Alwigham to be precise. It's an area I haven't visited for probably thirty years. The countryside and coastline are stunning, the air is fresh, there's a wonderful sense of peace and space, the colours vibrant and stars in their myriad so clear, add to this sunshine and tee-shirt temperatures – we were very fortunate. God's created world at its most magnificent, not a world one would want to get off!

John and I had gone to visit a nephew who had recently moved there from London. George (not his real name) had lost his father when he was three, been brought up with his brother by his mother and grandparents. A clever boy, he went to public school where in his mid-teens he had a breakdown. He was hospitalized for a considerable time, consequently missing out on a lot of his education. When fit enough he found he enjoyed caring for people with disabilities, he learnt sign language and became an advocate for the deaf. All the time through his early twenties he was struggling with his sexuality. While working with disabled people he was encouraged to train as a psychologist, which he did with great success.

From an early age George had recognized within himself a certain spirituality. He was baptized and confirmed into the Anglican church while at school and went to church when possible. Moving to live and work in London he searched for a church with a style of worship in which he felt accepted and comfortable; there are certainly plenty to choose from in London, but he didn't have a great deal of success. During this time of searching to have God in his life was becoming more and more important. To

this end he turned to the Roman Catholic Church and found what he was looking for. After instruction was he was accepted into the Catholic Church where he now finds his spiritual home and where he plays a prominent part, this was so both in London and now in the North.

Three years ago George went on a thirty day retreat (strangely, during which he met a girl with whom I had trained – a small world). It was as a result of this retreat that he began to look seriously at and to slow down his demanding and hectic life in London. He felt God was calling him to a new life. Eventually after much prayer and consideration he retired from his senior position within the NHS, found a delightful cottage in an equally delightful village near Alnwick. He had the courage to “get off the world” he had known all his working life, to move almost as far as he could away from London and to share his home with Barney, an energetic Northumberland terrier. George spends three days a week helping to lead retreats and acting as a spiritual director with the Northumbrian Community; he does a great deal of Biblical and spiritual reading as well as prayer and meditation. He walks miles with Barney and has recently accepted twelve hours a week in his capacity as a psychologist working with abused wives and children. He has been very much accepted into his new community, and in his spare time he is learning to dye, spin and weave local wool as well as being a wonderful host to his uncle and aunt and anyone who wishes to visit.

There must be times when many of us have screamed with frustration “Stop the world I want to get off!” and never felt able to anything about it. This is a true story of someone who has faced many difficulties, but with his closeness to and trust in God has been able to step off one world and step onto another with God’s blessing. I don’t think I have ever seen anyone more at peace with their life and themselves. I’m sure there are small adjustments we could all make to enable us to be at total peace with God and ourselves, but it does need working at, and God is there to help.



Liz Dowding, Associate Priest

From the Vicarage...

● **Welcome Johnsons!**

Steve, Lindsay, Esther and Anwen Johnson: we are delighted to welcome you to these villages and especially to the Christian family. So what has Steve come to do?

1. *To learn.* I was a new curate 25 years ago and I learnt that the welcome you receive affects the priest that you become. The best possible welcome enables a newly-ordained person to become the best church leader/priest they are capable of being. Steve comes with invisible "L-plates." "Hatches, matches and dispatches" are all new to him! We all make mistakes when we are learning and I'll tell you about some that I made if you ask me! Steve will learn best with lots of encouragement. While in training, Steve will spend one day per week learning/studying and each week he will cram a whole weekend off into just one day – Tuesday – so please don't ask him to do anything on a Tuesday because he has to say "no."

2. *To lead.* It is tempting to see a new minister and think now he can do the job that I have been hoping to give up! Imagine an orchestra where each conductor that came along was asked to play an instrumental part because a member of the orchestra wanted a rest; there would be no-one to help the orchestra make a beautiful sound. Steve has come to learn to be the best church leader he is capable of being. In his book "Going the distance," Bp. Peter Brain comments: "If a doctor suggests you go to hospital, you ask "when?" If an engineer

says a bridge is safe, you drive your car over it. But in ministry most people know better than the minister." Not that we should give Steve blind obedience, but take a look at *Hebrews 13 v.17*; it asks us to make our leader's life a joy, not a burden. Dearly loved minister, John Stott, said that "the minister's two chief occupational hazards are depression and discouragement," situations such as when the family he gives so much time to ignore him after he's done what they wanted him to do. But we want Steve to spring out of bed each morning looking forward to each new day's ministry, serving Jesus, who asks us all to co-operate, so let's encourage Steve! Speaking of which, Steve has come for a third "L"...

3. *To be loved.* Two years ago, Steve and his family left their old church family behind and now they've left their new friends at college behind. Dads, will you please make Steve feel welcome? Mums will you make Lindsay feel welcome? Churches like a minister to come with a happy family. To make that possible, we must allow Steve time with his family. Tempting as it is to ask him to do something on a Tuesday "just this once," Steve has to say "no" for the sake of his family. And, just one more thing: de-triangulation! What is triangulation? It is when you don't think the boss will agree with you, so you tell the boss' friend and ask him to tell "the boss," as if it was the friend's idea. What a very difficult situation that puts the boss' friend in! Be brave, don't try to recruit Steve to be your messenger.

Steve is God's gift to us, so let's share the job of helping Steve to be the best Minister that God has made him capable of being. Let us pray for him and his family daily; let us encourage them and join him in inviting others to join the loving family of followers of Jesus.

● **Churchwardens**

I am so pleased that six wonderful people have been elected and admitted by the Venerable Judy French, our Archdeacon, to serve as your Churchwardens for the coming year:

Goring	Brenda Kerr Muir	David Beddall
Streatley	Cynthia Hutt	John Rogers
South Stoke	Mike Codner	Harry Hogg

● **"Action Bibles" for 11 year olds**

For a number of years we have given the eleven year-olds leaving our village schools a Bible. Two years ago we were introduced to the award winning "Action Bible," which is a hard-cover Bible in cartoon form. It is wonderful to see children reading and learning bible stories, even before they leave church - the cartoons are irresistible. If you would like to contribute to the £15 cost of one or more of these bibles in Goring or South Stoke, do put your gift in a gift aid envelope marked "Action Bible." In Streatley we are fortunate to have a fund which generously covers this, for which we are so grateful to a very generous donor.

● **School Leavers' services**

Both Goring and Streatley Schools have a leavers' service in their parish church. There will be just a few spare places if you would like to come to support them. The services will both be on Tuesday 19th July at 2:15pm in Streatley, and at 7pm in Goring.

● **Communion Assistant training**

If you are a Communion Assistant and have yet to attend the training course, do come along to St Mary's, Streatley at 8.00pm on Monday 27th June when you can enjoy a fascinating evening exploring the background to the Holy Communion service, why it is also called "The Eucharist" and "The Lord's Supper," not to mention "The Mass"!

- **Summer and autumn sermon series**

During July we will conclude the first part of our summer series in which we are discovering what we can learn about Jesus from six different books of the New Testament. We began with Hebrews; Judy, our Archdeacon, took us to Colossians, and then we looked at Matthew's gospel. Each week we do three things, preferably in this order:

1. Listen to the sermon;
2. Read the chapter in Tom Wright's book; and
3. Read the whole of that Bible book out loud, possibly with a family member or friend.

The series is supported by a book *Following Jesus* by Bp. Tom Wright, which is selling like hot cakes – there are just a few copies left at £7.50. Ask a member of the ministry team to tell Paul if you would like a copy.

On Sunday 14th August Wendy will introduce us to the second part of our summer and autumn series which will explore the radical decision that we make when we choose to become a disciple of Jesus. Based on *Discipleship* by David Watson, we will explore lots of aspects of living as a follower of Jesus Christ. It is quite a challenge to allow God to lead the way that we behave, speak and think. Themes include "Being called into God's family," "Community" and "Sharing the Gospel." The book will be available from Sunday 7th August at the reduced price of £9.00.

This is the programme for July and August:

3 rd July		Lectionary
10 th July		4. John: The glory of God
17 th July		5. Mark: The servant King
24 th July		6. Revelation: A world reborn
31 st July	10.30	United Songs of Praise at South Stoke
7 th August		Lectionary in Streatley. (Family Service elsewhere.)
14 th August		Discipleship, an introduction
21 st August		1. Called to Discipleship
28 th August		2. Called into God's family

- **Streatley lunches on Sunday – an experiment that's open to all**

Sunday Lunch in the Morrell Room is planned, from time to time, following the 11.15am service. These will be "Bring and share" lunches. Don't miss the first lunch on Sunday 11th September. The morning is intended to make it easier for you to invite neighbours and friends to join you in church and afterwards for lunch.

Another "Bring and share" lunch is planned for Remembrance Sunday 13th November, again after church in the Morrell Room.

We also hope to have a Harvest Lunch on Sunday 2nd October, so keep the dates free and look out for more details in the September edition of Riverbank!

- **Audio Version of the Bible**

As we study the book "Following Jesus" within the latest Sermon Series, you may find it helpful to listen to a recording of the New Testament. Please follow the following link for a sample audio version of the recording:

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/products/new-testament/>

The full audio version of the New Testament costs £15.00.

- **The Vicar's holiday reading**

What are you going to read on your holiday this summer? It is a really good time to include a book that will expand your Christian faith. This summer I am looking forward to reading the former Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sachs', book *Not in God's name*.

- **Congratulations to Sally Stroud**

The Bishop has chosen to admit Sally, formerly Lady Sally Horton, to the Fellowship of St Birinus in recognition of her service to the church. Sally has served village and church as a wonderful Churchwarden in South Stoke for thirteen years and spent a period as a very effective Deanery Lay Chair. Thank you so much, Sally.

So who was St Birinus? He was made bishop in Genoa, and commissioned to convert the West Saxons. In 635, he persuaded the West Saxon king to allow him to preach. The King made Birinus the first Bishop of Dorchester and commissioned him to preach to parts of Britain where no missionary efforts had reached.

In May 2009 the Fellowship of St Birinus held its first meeting at Dorchester Abbey. The Bishop of Dorchester founded the Fellowship as a modest way in which we can honour people who have given exceptional service in some way or other to their church and community over a number of years. We are very glad that Sally demonstrates so generously the knowledge that there is no retirement in God's Kingdom, merely being called to another role, on the way to being promoted to Glory.

 Paul, the Vicar



What is a carer?

A carer is someone who provides unpaid care to a family member or friend. Sometimes the caring role can happen suddenly or sometimes it creeps up gradually. However it happens, it is a life-changing event. Caring is given willingly, but there frequently comes a time when a little more help is needed.

Several years ago, a Carers Group was started in Goring. We meet each month to help and support each other. We have professional speakers from time to time, but mostly it is the sharing of experiences and help to access appropriate services which is so useful. If you think you would be interested in coming to the group please contact me.

 Ann Hart, phone 873857



Collection at St Thomas': Open Doors UK

Open Doors UK is the local arm of an international Christian charity dedicated to the protection and support of our fellow Christians facing state, militant and community persecution wherever it occurs. Probably things have never been as bad as they are now. The work is dangerous and the accounts of suffering are often harrowing so please be as generous as you are able in the charity bucket at St Thomas' on 10th July. Thank you.

 Garry Alder



Die Alten Knaben concert in St Mary's

Sixteen men in a candlelit church singing entirely unaccompanied created a wonderful evening for us in St Mary's on 28th May.

Die Alten Knaben are based in Hamburg and visited us as part of their 2016 UK tour. They sang 13 pieces of music including the show-stopping pieces *Nunc Dimittis* set by Uwe Henkhaus, Miskinis' setting of Dylan Thomas's poem *Death shall have no dominion*, Poulenc's *Quatre petites prières*, Rossini's *Chant Funèbre* and Schubert's *Die Nacht*.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the evening and Die Alten Knaben have promised to return on their next UK tour in two years' time.



Stella



Vocal Works Gospel Choir at St Mary's

Tracy, Matt, Alice, Bindy and Tim of Vocal Works Gospel Choir really raised the roof of St Mary's on Sunday 19th June with a wonderful concert of gospel and soul songs as part of the Gap Festival. My particular highlight (and from the looks of it, theirs too) was Kirk Franklin's *Wanna be happy*, alongside standards such as *Swing low, sweet chariot*, and Labi Siffre's *Something inside*. Special mention must go to their impromptu backing dancers too!



Toria



The Palmer Ensemble

The Palmer Ensemble will be performing Schubert's Piano Quintet *The Trout* and Farrenc's *Piano Quintet No. 1* on Saturday 9th July at 7.30pm in St. Thomas' Church, Goring. Tickets are £12 for adults, £5 for children and are available on the door, from Garland's Organic, Pangbourne or Inspirations, Goring.

The Palmer Ensemble is a professional group of musicians all based in Berkshire. It has a core body of five young professional musicians all who studied at major music colleges in the UK. The ensemble was formed in 2015 and they have already made their mark on the Berkshire music scene, performing recitals using a varying number of members from the group. They have also established a thriving baby and children's concert series in Goring, and due to popular demand, recently started another series in Newbury. Keep up to date with all recitals and children's concerts at <http://www.palmerensemble.co.uk/>



Victoria Stapleton, The Palmer Ensemble

● The Ensemble are also giving a children's concert at 10:15am on Thursday 7th July at St. Thomas'. Tickets are £7.00 for adults; children are free.



Friends of St Mary's AGM

The fourth Annual General Meeting of the Friends of St Mary's was held in the Morrell Room on Sunday 15th May. The main purpose of the Friends is to raise funds to ensure that the fabric of the Church is maintained in good repair for the future. It appeals to not only the church congregation, but also to those in the local community who see the church as part of the village heritage and wish to see it preserved for future generations. The main highlights reported at the AGM were:

- The Charity Commission approved FoSM as a full Registered Charity;
- Income for 2015 from donations and fundraising events was £6472;
- Nearly £30000 has been raised in the 3½ years of FoSM existence;
- All five Trustees were elected for another year;
- Four successful fundraising events were held in 2015; the same are planned for 2016;
- The Lychgate Restoration Project is funded, but delayed due to the contractor's illness;
- A further £8000 of repair projects for St Mary's were committed for 2016 bringing the total to date to £18000.



Graham Harvey, FoSM Chairman, 0118984560



How happy and glorious we were!

Just in case you missed them, here is a selection of photos of the flower displays in St Thomas' to celebrate the 90th birthday of HM The Queen.



The list of flower arrangers and those who came to help include:

Elizabeth Ainsworth (rings on pulpit, the gate of the year);
 Prue Morton (flowers on and below the altar);
 Diana Davies (crown sceptre and orb);
 Wendy Middleton and children from year 5 (EIIR);
 Jenny Worthington (Maundy Money);
 Lynda Bates (Queen's racing colours);
 Sally Alder (red white and blue);
 Ingrid Dreweatt (Commonwealth);
 Ilene Wilson (hats and handbags);
 Marion Hill (Windsor Castle panorama);
 Lore Wade (tiny formal garden); and
 Catherine Coulson (porch welcome).



What Diane Davies achieved with Bonio biscuit boxes, ball cocks, curtain rings, decanter stoppers and goodness knows what else has to be seen to be believed! The evening's service was a really joyful occasion with a church packed to the rafters.



Jenny Boyd



The next issue of Riverbank will be published towards the end of August.
 Until then, have a wonderful summer, everyone.
 Toria (Riverbank editor)