

Different Views of Parish Life

What the Verger Sees

One of the most important roles in any church community is arguably that of the verger. The verger is an important link in the relationship between the ministry and the congregation, and provides an invaluable function in preparing and positioning everything necessary to ensure that the service goes smoothly and appropriately. Much of their work is behind the scenes, but a very important part of it is to be a listening ear when parishioners and members of the congregation, or even tourists and passers-by, have comments and suggestions to make. It's often the verger who gets to hear of it first!

Vanda Emery is the verger at St Peter and St Paul and comes from a long line of 'Tringers' who have had a close involvement with our church community. In the next edition, she will be interviewed to give us her views on the role within the church community today. When we were discussing the arrangements for this, one very interesting thing that Vanda mentioned was a critical issue which we *inside* the church often forget – that of keeping the doors open and welcoming to those *outside*.

I remember a dozen years or so ago when members of the Parish team (Mike Watkin, Janet Goodyear, Brenda Lee, Vivianne Child, Elizabeth Inall and Elizabeth Sims were prominent among the group) went on a retreat to Gloucester. One of the exercises we carried out in trying to define our approach to 'the perfect parish' was to do drawings of how the church should be seen from outside. One thing there was complete unanimity about was that the church should be shown with the doors open, the lights blazing and people being welcoming to strangers. Of course, we don't always achieve this. Indeed, despite global warming, there are many occasions in the year when it's essential we keep the doors firmly closed and the heating full on. However, as a metaphor of our role in the community, the church as a beacon of hospitality and the church community as a group of friendly ambassadors is a good one.

In every church we have church watchers, people who are there to keep the church open and safe – but more importantly to build a bridge with the community. In our conversation, Vanda suggested that perhaps this is an area in which the various Friends organisations could play a wider role, providing support and volunteers to keep our churches open and available more of the time for more of the people. We have really dedicated teams of church watchers but, like all other voluntary groups, it's difficult to get new recruits, and the same old people keep on doing the same old jobs, which perhaps demonstrates a law of diminishing returns. Please let us have your comments on this subject and, in particular, contact your existing church welcomers / watchers organiser and offer to help whenever necessary.

An open church is a living church – A closed church doesn't necessarily give off the right signals.

Thank you, Vanda, for bringing out this point in preparation for your interview. We look forward to hearing more of your thoughts in the next edition.

Grahame Senior



It's Competition Time!

What in the Parish is this?

Answers on a postcard, please. A bottle of fine wine for the first correct answer drawn.

To: The Editor, Tring Team Times, Greenways, 88 Grove Road, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 5PB.



It's your magazine, so why not use it?

Tring Team Times is a publication produced on behalf of the Parish to create a conduit of information and exchange of ideas amongst all the members. If you'd like to see any subject explored in future editions or if you'd like to write an article, submit a photograph or respond to any previous articles, please note that you will be very welcome indeed. The more people become involved in the magazine, the more value the Parish will get out of it. It is a considerable investment for the Parish and the better it is used the more benefit will return to the Parish. Please contact me with your thoughts at any time. Please note, we can always provide help with photography or any other aspect of preparation.

The Editor

P.S. Please also note that our circulation is unrestricted and if you know anyone either near or far who would enjoy receiving Tring Team Times, please let Vivianne Child and Mike Watkin – or me – know and we will arrange for them to be added to the circulation list.

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The Parish Looks Outward



A message from the Bishop - Update on the Parish Project

Looking after our most vulnerable members - Update on the financial situation

News from the villages - Opportunities for new learning - Déjà vu from Lee Abbey

As we come to the end of another summer and prepare for all the activities of autumn, it's good to see how outward-looking and positive are the views expressed in the articles in this edition. Sometimes it's good to look up from our navels and view the wider world. The Bishop so aptly sets a context for this. You'll also find an anonymous article following comments in the last edition which may well stir some reactions and responses – certainly it poses interesting questions about the focus of our church community. Please let me have any comments or ideas of things you would like covered in future editions. Tring Team Times is the magazine for all the members of Tring Team Parish and it's always better if views and opinions are shared and debated openly. *The Editor*

The View From Here



Have you been to the High Street in Tring lately? The construction/repair work has meant traffic cones, barricades, alternate routes for vehicles, and there has been a great deal of confusion about access to various places.

Comments have been varied. Some people deplore the inconvenience suggesting that the work should be done at night leaving the street open during the day causing less disruption.

Some of the shop owners are saying that they have less business because people don't have access. Other shop owners are suggesting that business is better because people are walking, taking their time, browsing and buying more.

There have also been some people who really like the situation (not the

construction, but lack of vehicles) and suggest that the High Street should be made a pedestrian only area.

It's reasonable to assume that one plan won't suit everyone. Some like the 'excitement' and novelty of change. Others are unhappy by anything out of their normal routine. The same is true in our worship and how we approach God.

There are different ideas, different perceptions, different suggestions... It's impossible to please everyone.

On just about any Sunday, in one of our five churches in this Team, you can find a Book of Common Prayer service, a Common Worship service, Evensong, Communion, All Age Worship, a service with contemporary music, a said service, a sung service, Morning Prayer. There are services on Sunday morning, Sunday afternoon, Sunday evening, and mid-week.

The different styles of worship generate different responses because different people find God in different ways.

In the five churches in our Team we aren't trying to please everyone. But we are trying to make available a wide variety of services that will draw people to worship in a way that allows them to best approach God.

On the notice board, or in the church porch area, or in the church, there is a list of the times all of our services including the type of worship. Some churches are open all day, everyday, some are not, but you can find people there on Sunday morning if you need access!

The churches are available to everyone, and you would be welcome.

Frank Mercurio, Rector

Head to Head
Read the interview
on page 4

From St John the Baptist, Aldbury

Having a Grade I listed medieval building in which to worship is a great privilege. As someone once commented, the church is made holy by the prayers of the previous generations and there is a real sense of the sacred in the building. However, along with this privilege comes a great responsibility: that of ensuring we leave a legacy for future generations, which means a lot of work. The good news is that our latest quinquennial report shows that St John the Baptist church is in good order with no major repairs required. Sadly, it doesn't mean that we can put our feet up as we have the major task of redecorating the interior over the summer, and the dreaded (but necessary) Health and Safety measures mean that we will need to do other work.



There are also two other aspects of our church on which we are focusing at the moment.

Firstly the clock. The church clock has been keeping time and striking the hours for the villagers of Aldbury for 158 years. It was made in 1849 by Thomas Joyce and the mechanism itself is described as an 'Armchair Strike'. It is an aesthetically beautiful example of a clockmaker's art in a particular style known as a 'pump pendulum'. However, of late the time keeping has been a little more erratic, and the striking mechanism has failed. In 1849 the ratchet wheel and pawl of the strike would have been made as a casting brass blank and then factory machined. The original casting was probably not sound and porosity caused the wheel to crack at the outer teeth rim. The failure of this means that the clock is no longer able to strike the hours and is only kept running by a creative 'bodge'.

Maintaining the clock in many ways has little religious significance, but the place of the church in the centre of village life makes it very important. We at St John's are grateful to the generosity of many in the village community who have contributed to the fund to repair the clock to full working order. Work should begin in the near future.



Secondly the font. Baptism is at the very heart of what we do as a community and it is about our identity as Christians, but our font is stuck away in the tower, which does not give the right impression of how important baptism is. It also means that practically it is difficult for a congregation to feel involved with what is happening, or even to see it. This means that when we baptise during a main service we invariably use a portable font in the centre so that all can be involved in the liturgy. We are beginning to have discussions about how we change this, and where the best place would be to reposition the font. It won't be a quick process, but is something that we must get right.

From All Saints, Long Marston

There are two very popular weekday services in our team that many of you may never have attended, and there are the Toddler Worship services in Tring (held weekly in term time) and in Aldbury (held twice a month throughout the year). Both offer an opportunity for parents and carers to bring children under school age to church without having to worry about the noise they make, or the need to change a nappy in the middle. I know that at Sunday services, people can be very kind about saying that it doesn't matter about the children making a noise, but it does make the experience very stressful for parents, and very hard to enter fully into the worship. Having a service where everyone is in the same boat makes it much more relaxing and reassuring, both very important, particularly for new parents or those unfamiliar with church. Very small children also have different requirements from a Sunday congregation: the service does need to be much shorter, and they cannot use the written word so those leading it need to draw on their imagination to tell stories and show pictures.



It is a place where the children, and adults, learn to feel comfortable in church, where they begin to learn hymns and prayers, where they know that they are part of the church today, rather than the church of tomorrow.

Long Marston is the other part of our team that has lots of families and children in (it is of course the other place that has a church school, as well as Tring and Aldbury), so it seemed a very logical move to introduce a Toddler Worship at All Saints. It will be held twice a month throughout the year, on the first and third Mondays at 2.00pm in church, and will start on 17th September. Dates will be on posters and flyers, and published in the village magazine as I know bi-monthly is not an easy one to remember. We have picked Mondays after discussion with some parents in Long Marston, but this can be changed later. At the moment, it is being called Toddler Worship, but we can have a competition for a more jazzy name if people prefer!

All are welcome: there will be songs, prayers, stories, drawing and maybe a bit of gluing and sticking if we are feeling daring. We have refreshments afterwards and finish in time to pick up older children from school. If you are interested, do come along. If you know of anyone else who might be, please let them know. And if you are just very relieved that you don't need to come to a church full of babies and toddlers, then please keep us in your prayers!

For further details contact Jane Banister: 01442 851200

Changes in regulations for those who wish to be married in church...



At a recent PCC meeting we discussed some of the changes in wedding regulations which you may have heard about from the national press. In July 2007, the General Synod approved steps to broaden the current wedding regulations, and these are expected to come into effect before Autumn 2008. The regulations are designed to make it easier for couples to get married in a church that has special meaning to them. The legislation is currently being prepared for parliament's Ecclesiastical Committee before its passage through both Houses of Parliament. After that, if it passes, it will receive Royal Assent.

At present the law states that anyone who lives in the parish has the right to be married in the church. If you do not live in the parish, then to be able to married in the church you need to be on the electoral roll of the church. This means worshipping in the church regularly for six months. Failing this, one of the couple can move into the parish for 15 days, or they can apply for a Special Licence from the Archbishop of Canterbury. The new legislation is seeking to make it easier for couples to be married in a church which has a special importance to them. The new wording is: - Provided the church is available, couples can choose to get married in: their local parish; the parish where they were baptised and/or confirmed; a parish they have lived in for six months or more, at any time during their lives; a parish they have attended worship in for at least six months; the parish their parents lived or worshipped in (during the child's lifetime); or the parish their parents or grandparents were married in.

Under the current regulations we always have a number of couples who join our congregations in order to qualify to be married in our churches. In a small congregation like St John the Baptist they are very noticeable, but you will also find 'wedding couples' in St Peter and St Paul most Sundays. It has been part of our thinking that having the opportunity to pray together as a couple and as part of a larger worshipping community is one of the cornerstones of marriage preparation. Quite often the local couples are full of good intentions about coming to church before their wedding, but somehow never manage to follow through with those good intentions because they don't have to come. The non-resident couples however have to come, and over the weeks they stop thinking about the church as a venue for their wedding and see it as a group of people trying to involve God in their lives. However, far more importantly, they get to meet the other worshippers and begin to form relationships with them. In his part of the presentation Frank reminded us how intimidating it can be for wedding couples to come into church, and how important the welcome they receive is. Maybe the new regulations will see more weddings in our churches, maybe there will be more nervous couples sneaking into the back of church to find out what we get up to. They are there because they want God's blessing on their marriage, but they will only keep coming if they are made welcome by all of us.

Huw Bellis

Some Clear Thoughts from the Bishop



It's very curious what hits the headlines. In Tring, no doubt, eyes will always be caught by stories about local schools or local events, and that's how it should be. Local newspapers, whether created by churches or by secular companies, play a vital part in nourishing communities.

There are some stories, however, which do not seem to hit the headlines either locally or nationally - and yet they are important.

Let me give an example. For the past few weeks I have had the privilege of serving on a committee in Parliament, made up of MPs and Peers, which has been scrutinising a Bill dealing with a leading-edge human problem. The problem is about the role that science and technology could and should play in assisting people who are having difficulty conceiving a baby in the normal way. Some of this science is about treatment, and some of it is about pure scientific research. Where should the boundaries be drawn?

The Bill is carefully drafted, even so (and unsurprisingly) there is disagreement amongst scientists, ethicists and others about some of the proposals being made. For example, whilst the Government is saying that parents should not have the right (except in very tightly controlled and rare circumstances) to choose the gender of their children, even if the technology is available to enable this to happen, there are others who argue that that choice should be given to parents. It's all very complex.

But the question is: are you aware that a Bill about these major human, ethical questions is coming down the tracks?

You see what I mean about 'headlines'. Well, I am doing what I can within the Joint Committee to raise some of the ethical questions that need to be asked, as indeed are other members of the Committee, but it's almost as though we are operating in a kind of sealed unit separate from the day-to-day world. This is not of our choosing, I hasten to add, nor is it the choosing of Government or Parliament, it's just that, for some reason, most newspapers seem not to be interested. But here are questions which need to be considered by us all. So, maybe the Tring Team Times can begin the discussion. What do you think?

Christopher William Herbert

Let us know what you do think for the next edition. The Editor

Opportunities and Activities for Learning



Head to Head

Former Head Girl Miriam Swaffield puts Tring School Head Teacher Julia Wynd in the Hot Seat

"Dedicated, loyal and focused", Julia stated without hesitation when asked to describe herself in three words. The fact that I actually sat there opposite a woman whose time is so sought after, on the very busy Thursday before the end of term, when in all honesty, having been suffering from a virus for the past couple of weeks, she shouldn't have been working at all, was testament to her accuracy in those words.

Before I stepped into her office, I had intended my interview, head to head with Julia Wynd, to be a quick-fire, surface-deep sweep of the woman behind the title of Head Teacher, much like the questionnaires we see on Myspace. However, as we sat there, door closed to the end of term frenzy, my trivial quizzing seemed unworthy of such a rare moment of peace that we had somehow created. Of course this didn't stop me from discovering that the three items Julia would take if she were stranded on a desert island would be a hair dryer, mascara and her husband; in that order. "Don't tell my husband he came last," she laughed as I scribbled it down...oops. Her ideal date with said husband would be a day in London with a meal out, a musical (no doubt her favourite - Les Miserables) then back to her local for evening drinks; it would seem Julia has the work hard, play hard balance pretty sussed. (Though I must just say, despite her love of musicals, Mrs Wynd cannot and therefore does not sing, even in the shower.)

However, these answers were not the ones that stuck in my mind at the end of the interview. Having known she wanted to become a cookery teacher since the age of eleven, yet only becoming a Head Teacher five years ago, to then land so sought-after a post as the leader of Tring School in such a short amount of time, speaks volumes. This woman can clearly make things happen, with or without her hair dryer and mascara. And yet, does Julia come across as the ruthless career woman her rapid climb up the ladder of success would suggest? No. How can someone who sees the greatest part of her job being the fact she knows she is serving society, making a worthwhile contribution to the lives of others every day, be seen as anything but inspirational? Julia in fact used that very word to describe "the youth of today" - it seems the inspiration works both ways.

What strikes me most about the Head Teacher is that aside from this title, Julia lets you see she's human, with real fears about not being good enough, not only in her job, but in every aspect of her life - a fear most of us have, but not all of us are brave enough to admit. And yet her optimistic approach to everything, believing the purpose of her life to be "to contribute positively to the other people we are with", makes Julia's claim of being "a people person" more genuine than most, understanding that to connect and really know people below the surface, involves letting them see the same in you. "If you risk nothing, you risk even more" is the motto framed on one of the cabinets in her office, and after spending a year getting to know the new Head of Tring School, I can safely say that the risk has paid off. I have got to know the teacher behind the title, I have seen behind the status and, for those of you who are yet to have the pleasure of meeting Mrs Wynd, I can assure you, this woman is not found wanting.

As I stepped back into the bustling hub of reception an hour later, a little disorientated by how fast the time had gone, I paused, breathed. End of an era. The new Head Teacher, nameless and nervous, entering an alien school and being shown the ropes by the Head Boy and Girl in September 2006, was now Julia Wynd, the leader and friend whose passion for people and giving them the best opportunities and experiences she can, spells an exciting future for Tring School. Walking out of the front doors as a student for the last time, I smiled, remembering that this is the first thing Julia notices about someone when she meets them. But the fact is, in the company of such a special person, I don't see how you could do anything else.

Miriam Swaffield

Editor's note: Miriam is one of the team who've been working with us at Tring School on various editorial projects, and carrying out a number of interviews for us. Their freshness of approach has been very valuable and we intend to continue it in future editions.

The next interviewees are likely to be Vanda Emery, Verger at St Peter and St Paul, and Colin Stevens, leader of Tring Choral Society and so many other musical initiatives. And while we're on the subject of musical extravaganzas...

...Don't miss out on one of the best Nights of the Year when Michael Bernstein and Colin Stevens bring their hit show 'Flanders & Swann' to Tring. The show is on Friday 12th October and tickets are available from Heather Simms at the Tring Learning Centre on 01442 821067 or see the posters for details.



Ward Off Winter

Autumn. Evenings drawing in, a chill in the air, mist in the morning. Or is that what we can expect any more? I'm going to assume it is, because although I happen to like a lot of things about this season, it gives me the opportunity to suggest warming things to do midweek, from 4.00pm onwards. Since you are reading a FOTCH newsletter, there is every chance that Grahame will already have encouraged you to plot into your diary some activities in a Very Good Cause - and quite right too. If, however, you are in the exceptionally fortunate position of having Wednesday evenings (and occasionally other evenings) free I urge you now to use INK to reserve that time for Tring Learning Centre. The Programme for 2007-2008 is out now out, available in leaflet form, and well worth the time it takes to read. This year, we are extending our Programme from September to July in line with feedback and requests.

Here is a selection of ways you can ward off winter doldrums and energise your mind and/or body, while being sociable, having fun and supporting Tring Learning Centre.



1. Learn something new: Bridge, Self Defence, Egyptian Dance, e-bay, Microsoft Word, Indian/Italian Cookery (where all the ingredients are provided - bliss!)
2. Refresh and extend your current knowledge: Italian, French, Italian Cookery, Excel
3. Sharpen your Career Profile: Personal Development workshops
4. Be creative: Flower Arranging, Writing (Spring and Summer)
5. Be pampered: one-to-one, 29th November (not so sociable, but very good for you)
6. Organise your wardrobe - 15 garments = 50 outfits: 3/10/07
7. Cinema Club - 28th November - See our website for our first film
8. Bring a friend - share the transport and be pleased at going green!

If you can, please take a look at our website; www.tringlearningcentre.org from time to time. You'll find full details, course information, updates, tutor profiles and comment there. In addition, I'm a phone call away - please call me on 01442 821067 or email hsimms@tring.herts.sch.uk to chat through anything of interest.

Above all, Tring Learning Centre is there for you to enjoy. So this year, please mark your diary with confidence - mid-week is looking busy, Grahame!

Heather Simms

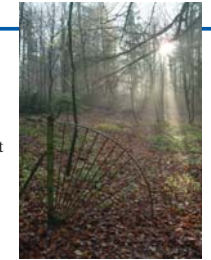
Tring Campus Talks Yearbook Celebration



One of the initiatives we've been pursuing with Tring School - the school that serves the families of our total Parish - is the development of a web magazine, Tring Campus Talks. This has been very successful and it's refreshed on a regular basis. If you'd like to read it visit www.tringcampustalks.org. At the end of last term, a sponsored yearbook printed edition was produced, which was given to all school leavers, all members of staff and all the key opinion leaders of the area. The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that the views of our young people and their opinions on the wider world are channelled and openly expressed. It makes very interesting reading and I'm sure you will be very impressed with the breadth and depth of thinking that goes on within the minds of the younger members of our community. If you'd like a copy of the yearbook, please let me know. This is an important part of our outreach into the community.

Extending Our Outreach - the Parish Project focuses on Kyrgyzstan.

Habitat for Humanity is an extremely well established charitable initiative which harnesses the energies and resources of committed volunteers and focuses them on the practical business of providing housing in the areas of the greatest need. Following the initial discussions at the Herne Bay Parish event, a full consultation has now taken place in the Parish and a meeting to move the whole programme forward was held in July in the church hall. Like everything else, the Parish Project has to be fitted into the list of priorities and requires active and committed support in order to move it forward. If you'd like to know more or get involved in any way in this initiative, please contact Huw Bellis (01442 851200).



'Who's Who' and 'What's On'

Important reference pages to cut out and keep by the phone

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What's On

Date	Event and Venue	Time
Sept - Oct	Tring Team Mission Committee are supporting HCCIF, Ethiopian Fistula Hospital.	Various events
Sat 1st Sept.	Cecilia Hall, Puttenham. Jumble Sale.	2pm
Tues 4th Sept	PCC Standing Committee	12 noon
Wed 5th Sept	St Peter and St Paul, Tring. Toddler Service new term starts.	2pm
Sat 8th Sept	All Saints, Long Marston. BBQ.	5pm - 7pm
Sat 8th Sept	Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust sponsored Bike Ride.	10am - 6pm
Tues 11th Sept	Churches Together in Tring meeting at Wigginton Baptist Church.	
Thurs 13th Sept	St John the Baptist, Aldbury. DCC.	8pm
Sun 16th Sept	St. Cross, Wilstone. Patronal Festival.	6.30pm
Mon 17th Sept.	All Saints, Long Marston. Toddler Worship. (Every 1st & 3rd Monday thereafter)	2 - 3pm
Tues 18th Sept.	Ministers and Wardens Meeting at Aldbury Vicarage.	8pm
Wed 19th Sept.	All Saints, Long Marston. DCC.	
Thurs 20th Sept.	Homeless Artists from St Martin's in the Fields visit Aldbury	
Thurs 20th Sept	Mission Committee Meeting,	
Sun 23rd Sept.	Harvest Festivals: Long Marston, Wilstone and Puttenham, All Saints, Long Marston. St.Mary's, Puttenham. 10am - 3.30pm	
Mon 24th Sept.	Rota Planning.	
Tues 25th Sept	PCC Meeting. Preceded by a short service at 7.30pm.	8pm
Sat 29th Sept.	All Saints, Long Marston. Tring Chamber Music Concert. "Music by Candlelight" Tickets:01442 822732.	8pm
Sun 30th Sept	St Mary's Puttenham. Holy Communion Team Service with the Rt Revd Christopher Foster.	10am
Mon 1st Oct.	Village Hall, Wilstone. The Art of Flower Arranging in aid of St Cross. Tickets from village shop or 01442 824394. 7.30pm	
Sat 6th Oct.	Cecilia Hall, Puttenham. Supper & Auction plus Musical entertainment.	
Fri 12th Oct.	Bible Society Dinner & Quiz	
Sat 13th Oct.	Sunnyside Church, Berkhamsted. Church Growth Conference. Our Parish to send 30 delegates	10am - 3.30pm
Thurs 18th Oct.	St John the Baptist, Aldbury. DCC	
Mon 29th Oct.	Ministers' Meal	
Sun 4th Nov.	All Saints, Long Marston. Patronal Festival Team Service	10am
Thurs 15th Nov	PCC Meeting. Preceded by a short service at 7.30pm	8pm
Sat 17th Nov.	Arts Educational School. FOTCH Event "White Christmas".	7.30pm
Tues 20th Nov.	Mission Committee Meeting	
Wed 21st Nov	All Saints, Long Marston. Church Army Preacher.	
Thurs 29th Nov.	St John the Baptist, Aldbury. DCC	
Thurs 13th Dec.	St John the Baptist, Aldbury. Fabric Committee.	
Sun 30th Dec.	St Peter and St Paul, Tring. 5th Sunday Team Worship.	10am
Tues 15th Jan	PCC Meeting. Preceded by a short service at 7.30pm	8pm
Sat 9th Feb 2008	St Peter and St Paul, Tring. All Age Worship Planning meeting.	9.30am
Sat 10th May 2008	St Peter and St Paul, Tring. FOTCH Family Fun Day.	10am - 4pm
May 7th-16th 2008	Pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Rev Bill and Mrs Rosemary Carpenter. Telephone 01442 824585.	



Lee Abbey Revisited

Do you remember our trip to Lee Abbey for the Parish Away Weekend in 2002? Well, last week my friend Lesley and I went there again... by mistake!

We were on our way from Minehead to the Coombe Martin Wildlife and Dinosaur Park - a drive over the fearful A39 Porlock Hill - when we took a wrong turn in Lynmouth and found ourselves driving across what looked like the moon, with huge piles of rocks that looked about 20 metres tall. The road was a tiny, tiny winding path which, even for Somerset, didn't look like an A road. A sign saying 'toll road' didn't give us much confidence and then another saying 'scenic route to Woody Bay' sealed our fate.

Then I felt I recognised the view - and round the next corner we found Lee Abbey! We stopped and looked back at the house (what a view!) and forwards to the bay (what a view!!) and sideways to the gardens. The sun came out for a few seconds and I could see people sitting on the benches under the huge trees in the gardens - just as we did on our Lee Abbey weekend. It brought back some great memories of our visit; visions of Andy Nash in a dancing class

(or was that a dream?). James and Peter carriage riding with Christine, stopping in Minehead on the way there to buy raincoats for the boys because we'd left ours in the porch, Dougie, James and Peter dominating the crèche, tales of Henry swimming in the sea, lots of lovely times sitting in the gardens - and our car not starting on the day we tried to go home!

Back to 2007 and Lesley and I had no choice but to carry on along the 'scenic route'. We didn't see any 'scenes' because Lesley had her eyes closed and I was too busy worrying about why there was grass growing in the middle of the road. I think, 2cm to the right of the car. I could see a 200 metre (at least!) drop to the sea. After 30 minutes of fear we came out on the A39 a mere five miles from where we started. However, with hindsight, it was lovely to reacquaint myself with the stunning scenery of Lee Abbey and remind myself that the setting was one of the reasons we went there. *Vivianne Child*



Tring Team Parish Takes Strength from its Variety

Some challenging thoughts from a parishioner. The note below was sent to me after the publication of the last edition and raises a number of these issues which are often debated in committee meetings and around the "parish pump".



An Interesting (But Sadly Anonymous) Point of View

I thought you might be interested to see this viewpoint and let me know what you think. This financial issue is always a thorny one. However, the fact remains that in church life, as in everything else, 'if you can't buy the ticket, you can't see the show'. Have a read and let me know what you think. (It is printed verbatim with no editing and no corrections):

To The Editor,

Tring Team Times

After reading several articles, I feel some of you are missing the point of Christianity.

The olde saying 'charity begins at home' comes to mind. If we have any left over / or / spare then we can give to others but not until we have surfiest our own coffers.

As for people giving to the church, there are ways and means of going about it, i.e. a project: Like falling masonry, I'm sure people would really if people new the cost to put it right. My view from where I stand on the edge of the church is you need to bring in the younger generation, you need to have new blood, the 25 year old - 50 year old. Those of us who are older have done our bit for the town, we can't keep coming up with new idea's, we are spent as the saying goes. The link is with the schools, persuade them (parents) that they are wanted. We / you need their help / support. Just a few hours or a few bob (shilling). If you think people rather than money money money, then it will come. It's as though you can only see pound signs when you see people. People then put up the shutters and we lose out.

Or you want to ram preaching down people's throats. That also puts people off.

Not community but people. Five a day. 1st Speak to people, make them feel welcome, not just in church but outside. I will admit if someone I know wants to avoid me, keep their head down, I make a point of saying hello and smile. 2nd Say thank you. We all forget these simple words. 3rd Help someone. Shopping, mowing there lawns, tidying there bins. 4th Arrange something, a meeting, a car to pick you up or to take someone to hospital. 5th Do. It's all well and good to say these things, just make sure you follow them through I'm not going to put my name to this as I think I'm a bit outspoken, which I feel you won't like.

We like to try and support the things that churches put on. It's our way of helping.

You need to entice more people into the church but gently.

I've enjoyed writing this, I hope you enjoy reading it. If there any points you might like to answer, put it in the TTT Times. I'll read it then and if you think you know who wrote this, keep it to yourself.'

Anon

Editor's note: I've printed this as it was written. Clearly written with passion and with a certain enjoyment, as stated. What a pity we can't enter into an open debate. The real point here, I think, is that much of what is said is good common sense, and is the kind of practice we try to practise as well as preach. The problem is, of course, that sometimes good intentions don't get it done. Have a talk to your local treasurer, if you like, and see where we are on the financial front. More importantly, have a talk to your local warden and see how we are on the 'let's grow our congregations and our community' front. They have to go hand in hand if we are to be at all successful. Let me know what you think – and it really doesn't have to be anonymous; disagreement and healthy debate is the language of caring - The Editor



More Tails From The Riverbank

Ratty was right. There's nothing so fine as just messing about on the river. The first week of June saw Gerry and me heading west again, this time to Dorset, laden with wellies, wet-weather gear, rods, reels, nets and flies. We had booked a week in a cottage near Dorchester, and two day's fishing on the Frome just a few hundred yards away. As the finale we had another full day on the wonderful Wiltshire Nadder to look forward to.

On day one everything seemed perfect. Light clouds skittered across the sky, the sun broke through just long enough to keep us warm but not enough to send the fish under cover, and the trout were rising. These were catch and release beats so we wouldn't be able to feast on our prizes, but the experience would be useful and the river was wonderful. But by lunchtime I had not a single bite and none of the flies I tried had generated any interest.

Gerry was fishing the next beat and our picnic was a welcome break and chance to compare notes. He'd had more success, with several bites and one in the net. As he clumped off in his new waders, refreshed for the afternoon session, I ambled back downstream, just watching and enjoying the river. There were ducks of course, and a pair of swans, and in a pool by the bank were small eels. And then suddenly the first red squirrel I've ever seen, standing up on the bank, squirrel-like, watching me. I squinted over the top of the polaroids to make sure Specsavers hadn't given me rose-tinted ones, but no, the squirrel was definitely red. After a brief moment, it dropped into the water and swam across to the opposite bank with its tail spread out like a beaver's.

Buoyed by joy and enthusiasm (and a half bottle of Merlot) I renewed the hunt. By this time I'd used so much tippet in changing flies that I was nearly back to the leader. A good thing. The very fine tippet I'd been told to use for fooling a wary trout is not just fine, it's invisible, and after threading and rethreading it through small flies my eyes were beginning to rebel. None of the little brown jobs having worked I thought I'd give up on the practical and go for a bit of feminine guile. What does a girl fancy at 4.30 on a sunny afternoon? A nice fat cream cake. Ignoring the tut-tutting voice in my head, I selected the nearest equivalent to a cream bun in my fly box; big, yellow and fluffy. It worked. First cast, a nice healthy looking trout, fighting for all she's worth. I held on grimly, keeping the line taut as instructed. Uh oh... (Here comes Beginner's Dumb Blunder Number 1.) The net was still lying on the bank downstream where I'd left it. I nearly managed to draw the fish far enough but she was way too smart and suddenly the line went slack and she was gone, leaving my cream bun floating in the water. In a way, I was glad. I didn't deserve her. Fishing day two was a similar story. Trout were rising to the fly but always wily enough not to close their jaws on it. The cream bun cut no ice today, and there were no more squirrels.

Finally, another lovely day on the Nadder with excellent weather, albeit with a 'challenging' breeze. A few more flies were lost in the overhanging trees. No luck for either of us in the morning, but by late afternoon Gerry had four fine trout in the bag and an expression like a cat that's licked the cream. I hooked one and hung on for a while, but again it won. But I'm learning and I'll get one soon... That night we feasted on Gerry's catch, with three in the freezer to bring home, and it dawns on me that, underneath the 21st century interest in computers and quarks, I have married a hunter-gatherer after all, and I'll never go hungry!

By the way, and before you remind me that Ratty was referring to boats not rivers, I'd like to point out in my defence that, if boat-building rats and toads in plus-fours isn't using artistic licence, then my name is Isaac Walton.

Gillian Miller

A Fine Facility in the Parish

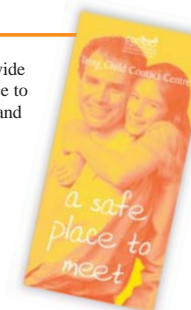
Tring Child Contact Centre is a facility which can have a profound effect on children's lives and deserves wide support. It is available twice a month on Saturday afternoons throughout the year and provides 'A Safe Place to Meet' so that children and a parent who is no longer living with them can have a happy afternoon together and keep in touch. It is friendly and child-oriented, providing a range of toys and simple refreshments, and the welcoming presence of enough helpers to ensure that everyone feels – and is – safe.

Two kinds of care are provided. Most families come for Supported Contact, using the facility because of a traumatic history or where there is insufficient trust between the estranged parents to allow the children to be taken out freely in the locality. When Supervised Contact has been ordered by the Family Court, this is normally because it is considered unsafe for children to be in direct contact with their visiting parent without a third party being present. In this case, we provide one-to-one attachment by a trained volunteer, who stays within sight and sound of the family throughout the visit. We can often help in developing appropriate play and communication and we give general support and reassurance.

We welcome both local families and those for whom Tring is a convenient halfway point. Fathers have come from as far away as Yorkshire and East Sussex. Contact takes place in the two large rooms on the lower floor of Old Church House, Western Road – formerly known as The Well. It is staffed by a coordinator and a group of volunteers mainly from St Peter and St Paul and other local churches, who operate on a rota basis approximately every six weeks. They bring a wide range of skills and experience, and all are CRB approved. Ongoing training is provided and there are opportunities to attend regional and national workshops arranged by the National Association of Child Contact Centres, which is our accredited body.

They are supported by Trustees who are responsible for overall management and fundraising, and an annual general meeting is held in February or March. Anyone interested in helping either as a volunteer or as a Trustee – or in just finding out more about this 'fine facility' – should contact the coordinator, Celestria Bell on 01442 381 566.

Celestria Bell



Serious Matters of Money and Magic

Money

Grahame Senior argues the benefits of planned giving.

If you're a member of the electoral roll, you'll already have received an extensive letter signed by the great and good of the Parish on the subject of each individual's involvement in the joint commitment to 'pay our way'. No doubt lots of you have already responded and will have been stimulated by the interesting information contained in the mailing on the subject of how our Parish expenditure is made up and how important it is for us to ensure that we have enough funds to do all the good things we want to do as a community.

As our anonymous writer stresses on page 8, it is very easy to go on too much about money and sometimes this happens to the detriment of other subjects. The problem is, of course, that like the poor, invoices and expenses are something we always have with us and they don't go away. (even if we want them to!)

If you're not already a member of the Team Scheme and you are a member of this Parish community, could I please add my voice to the group in requesting that you do consider it. We have many bold and valuable initiatives in this Parish – it is a place of lively minds, individual ambition to do good and a strong sense of responsibility for those less fortunate than ourselves. Whether it is the Parish Project with its outreach to Kyrgyzstan, the completion of the works going on in a number of our fine churches or the importance of strengthening our contributions to mission and education, it all needs money and it all needs a balanced budget.

Our district and Parish treasurers do a wonderful job in keeping track of things and keeping us in touch with reality. We also have in Godfrey Orrell the most skilled operator of the tax rebate collection system, which is a huge contribution that comes in addition to the money individually given by our tax paying supporters. Planned giving supported by gift aid is by far the most effective way of helping the Parish as a whole plan its future activities and ensure that the right priorities are met. If you can help in any way, please do contact your treasurer or discuss the matter with your local Team Scheme representative. As we all recognise, it is one Parish with one set of Parish responsibilities, and perhaps one of the best moves forward of the past few years has been the way in which there is reciprocal support between all the individual district churches for activities which affect the Parish as a whole.

'By their works you shall know them' is a well established saying and as true today as it ever was. I'm not sure we'll ever get quite as far as getting the community around us to observe, 'just look how these Christians love one another' but a smiling approach to giving certainly does help.

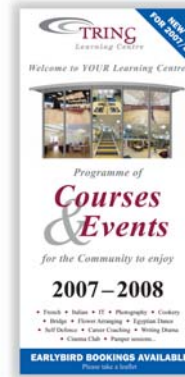


Magic?

Heather Simms investigates the possibilities open to you in the coming year at The Tring Learning Centre.



Still no magic wand, but there's magic in the air! Over the summer I've had the good fortune to meet up with enthusiastic tutors with interesting plans for classes and keen to support Tring Learning Centre. Linda Dawe, for example, is coming in to tutor a 'Return to Learn' course – just right for adults thinking of embarking on a new stage of learning, such as an Open University course. Linda also tutors 'Reminisce and Write' and 'Make a Drama out of it'. Her experience with WEA over many years has enabled her to develop a ready understanding of adult learners. I am sure that we will benefit from Linda's range of skills and knowledge.



A day which stands out in my mind, was the rainy (!) day that Jean Buchanan came to see me, to sort out her flower arranging class. As Jean moved to sign the Visitors Book in Reception, the heavens opened, the fire alarm sounded, and Jean was escorted swiftly out to the playing fields along with the whole school. I take it as a good sign that Jean remained cheerful and having eventually parked her dripping umbrella, got down to business as if nothing had happened. I enjoyed Jean's visit very much, and look forward to things floral happening in the autumn. As Jean said, it's a great time of year because there's so much foliage around, with wonderful colours – starting in the hedgerows.

While on the subject of colour, let me mention Fiona McClurg-Welland who specializes in colour and style – as in clothes and make up. The day I met Fiona, we were dressed quite similarly, but I don't think we look at all alike. I was dying to get her to cast her professional eye over me, but she very tactfully refrained. Like everyone else, I'll wait until her session on 3rd October... to see how my wardrobe can work best for me! Maybe I'll book a little one-to-one session with her on 29th November. Perhaps, if you are technologically minded, you might be inclined to seek out the Happy Snaps digital photography sessions, or the Parent's guide to the use of the internet and technology in education. Actually, you don't have to be a parent to appreciate this wizardry, but you would have a vested interest in it!

Our Programme for 2007-2008 is now available in leaflet form. Because there are more events and courses this year, the leaflet gives concise details. If you have not received yours, please let me know so I can send you one. There are classes in subjects such as Personal Development, Computers, Bridge, Self Defence, Italian language, Italian Cookery, Egyptian Dance and it is now possible to take some courses over three terms, starting mid/late September and concluding in June. Some subjects are offering two starting levels, Beginners and Improvers/ Refresher.

Our website, www.tringlearningcentre.org is growing in importance in terms of communication now. Please take a look at it regularly if you can, because you'll find detailed course information, updates, news of developments (e.g. Cinema Club) tutor comments and tutor profiles there. The aim is to share as much information as possible with you. You can book any sessions via the website, and you can send me suggestions or feedback that way. That said, I appreciate it very much if you find time to give me a call on 01442 821067. I am happy to post information to you, of course.



When the Sun Shines...

Which it certainly did on Saturday August 11th when Amelia Nash had her graduation party. Remember Amelia Nash? For many parishioners of St Peter & St Paul she was that lovely girl in the midst of a caring family who came to church in her mid-twenties in a wheelchair. Nice things do happen and Amelia is not only the girl who managed to shake off that illness and get back to normal life, but she is now a 26-year-old on the brink of a very exciting career.

An accomplished glider pilot and instructor, she has worked her way through Bristol University and achieved a First Class degree in Physics, she has led the dance on so many joyful occasions when she has performed at Parish Parties, FOTCH festivals and AAW services with joy and grace; she has been an exhibitor in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition and she has landed herself a pretty challenging job in consultancy starting this October.

The party in Pitstone to celebrate her graduation was a very happy affair and a chance for many people to congratulate Amelia on making the most of all the opportunities God and a loving family have given her.

The Editor



In a Country Churchyard...

One of the songs in Aldbury Junior Choir's repertoire is "In a Country Churchyard" by Christ de Burgh. It is a charming piece, although much of its appeal does come from it's singers, and is often picked by wedding couples because the lyrics tell of a bride arriving at the church door (they end with her arriving in her coffin but we refrain from pointing that out to the couples!).

I have lived near churchyards for much of my life. When young, other children would ask if I wasn't scared living so close to all the graves, but my view then was what it is now, that the living can be far more frightening than the dead. Had I lived by a churchyard in an inner city, it might have been a more scary place. A churchyard is a fascinating place to wander round, and one can learn a great deal about the history of a community: the same surnames crop up again and again, fashions in Christian names change and go, and the style of the stones themselves changes.

One of great difficulties for those of us who have a faith is watching others view the graves as if that is now the dwelling place of the deceased. It is a commemoration, a memory, but it can be very sad to watch those whose grief has frozen at a particular moment. What is good to watch however, is several generations of a family coming to pay respects, and to share memories and to laugh. Often, the graves that are the least well tended are often those of the regular church members' families: they know that the person they loved is not there.

Each of our churches in the team is surrounded by a churchyard and without doubt, this adds to their beauty and sense of spirituality. It also adds to the workload of those who look after the building and community as they are large areas of land. It is only with time that one can see a churchyard as a whole entity, as part of a whole community, with each piece playing a part.

I hope that you are able to spend time in one of our churchyards, and while you are there, to offer up a prayer of thanks.

Jane Banister