

# InSpire



**Winter 2013/14**

The Magazine of St Luke's Church, Maidenhead

# Travelled From Afar

This year, St Luke's, Maidenhead, have swapped travelling nativity sets with the church of St Matthew's in Canada.

## DESTINATION CANADA

Words: Sally Lynch

Thank you to everyone who knitted characters for the knitted nativity set that we have now sent to St Mathew's Church, Conestoga, in Ontario, Canada. Here they are before they were packed up to go off in the post.

The vicar's friend, Pastor Monika Wiesner, is looking forward to dedicating it to use with families there. We hope to receive a set in return.

The Lutheran church at St Matthew's has a strong ministry of knitting prayer shawls



which are given to those who are sick or in need. They are very beautiful.

When I visited, I was amazed to find a whole room set aside for knitting, with wool and stored produce. They have recently started making knitted teddies and also baby blankets and chemocaps. This is a real act of love – rather like our own Stitch Up group, which is currently making blankets to send to the Kori project in Sierra Leone.

## UGANDAN VISITORS

Words: Ann Darracott

When the nativity set from Canada hadn't arrived by the 10am service on 1 December – the day they were due to be officially launched into the congregation – all was not lost.

Serena stepped in with a set she'd brought back from Uganda, made from banana fibre. It began its journey when the Vicar gave the set to the first person on the list, with the words: "I pass this nativity set to you; may it be a reminder of the birth of Jesus, our saviour." A little fumbling for spectacles ensued, before eventually she replied: "I receive this crib with joy and will treasure all that it means in my home."



The last family on the list will bring the crib to the Christingle service at 4:00pm on Christmas Eve, so that everyone can receive it.

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## Advent and Christmas services and activities at St Luke's Church

### Christmas Tree Festival 13 to 15 December

**Friday 13:** 10:00am - 5:00pm, church open to view decorated trees; stalls and refreshments.

1:00pm, free recital by River City Saxes, (lunch available from midday).

**Saturday 14:** 10:00am - 5:00pm, church open to view decorated trees; stalls and refreshments.

6:00pm, Community meal and singalong

**Sunday 15:** 2:00pm - 5:00pm, Church open to view decorated trees; stalls and refreshments.

6:00pm 'Christmas Tree' service.

### Tuesday 17 December

1:30pm, St Luke's Primary School Carol Service.

### Thursday 19 December

7:00pm, Carol singing around the parish.

### Sunday 22 December

10:00am, All age Holy Communion with presentation by children and young people.

6:00pm, *Nine Lessons and Carols*, by candlelight, followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

### Christmas Eve, Tuesday 24 December

4:00pm and 5:00pm, Christingle Services.

11:30pm, Midnight Mass.

### Christmas Day, Wednesday 25 December

10:00am, All Age service of Holy Communion.

### Saturday 28 December

3:30pm - 5:30pm, Messy Christmas – family fun activity for all ages with meal (£1 pp).

### Sunday 29 December

10:00am Word service with Holy Baptism.

### Sunday 5 January

6:00pm, Epiphany Carol Service.



## A Note From The Editor

I am sat at the back of church and all around is the smell of fresh firs. It is Narnia, a winter wonderland; it's wonderful. Our Christmas Tree Festival, which opens to the public tomorrow, has become a staple fixture in St Luke's countdown to the big day. "It wouldn't be Christmas without it."

But that's a phrase I always find a bit odd. I think it's brandished about a bit too carelessly. Everything, from hereditary recipes to Cliff's calendar, gets this weird status attached to it. Surely the only thing "it wouldn't be Christmas without" is Jesus?

There's a lot of people who'd subscribe to that thinking, to such an extent that they'd argue only Christians should be able to celebrate Christmas. (Certainly, it's easy to find oneself wondering why we should 'slog it out' every week, when everyone else just seems to turn up at Christmas for 'our' big day...)

But, stop. Wait. The inconvenient truth is that, whether they know it or not, anyone who spends time with their loved ones at this time of year is upholding a deeply Christian message: that of the importance of family. Christmas really does bring people together. (Just as well, really, given all the stress and anxiety it generates in the weeks prior.)

As many readers know, my brother now lives in Cardiff, my sister in Edinburgh. Having spent years arguing with them every day, nowadays I barely see them at all. Happily, this Christmas, they'll be home in Maidenhead and we'll celebrate as a family. Rather sadly, I'm beginning to wonder how many more we've still got – as the five of us – to enjoy.

However you choose to celebrate, however much you spend on presents or food or decorations, it's down to remembering Jesus is at the heart of it and everything else is on top.

Happy Christmas and new year.

Andrew Burdett, Editor,  
December 2013

*InSpire* magazine is published thrice a year. The Editor wishes to thank everybody who contributed to this issue, and reminds readers that the next issue will be published in Summer 2014. Disclaimer: Any views expressed in this magazine are solely those of the article's respective author(s), and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor; St Luke's Church, Maidenhead; the Diocese of Oxford; or the Church of England – unless stated otherwise.

For details of our many events and services, please see: [www.stlukeschurchmaidenhead.org.uk](http://www.stlukeschurchmaidenhead.org.uk)

# Be Prepared

In her latest column, vicar **Sally Lynch** prepares for Christmas.

I went all the way through the Guide movement – Brownie (there were no Rainbows in those days!), Guide, Ranger, Young Leader, Adult Leader... and I had the Guide motto drummed into me such that I still try to live it out. Be prepared. The reasons behind the motto may have changed since the days of Lord and Lady Baden Powell, but it is surely still a good motto to live by. If we have thought a little ahead, made some preparations then we can face all that life throws at us.

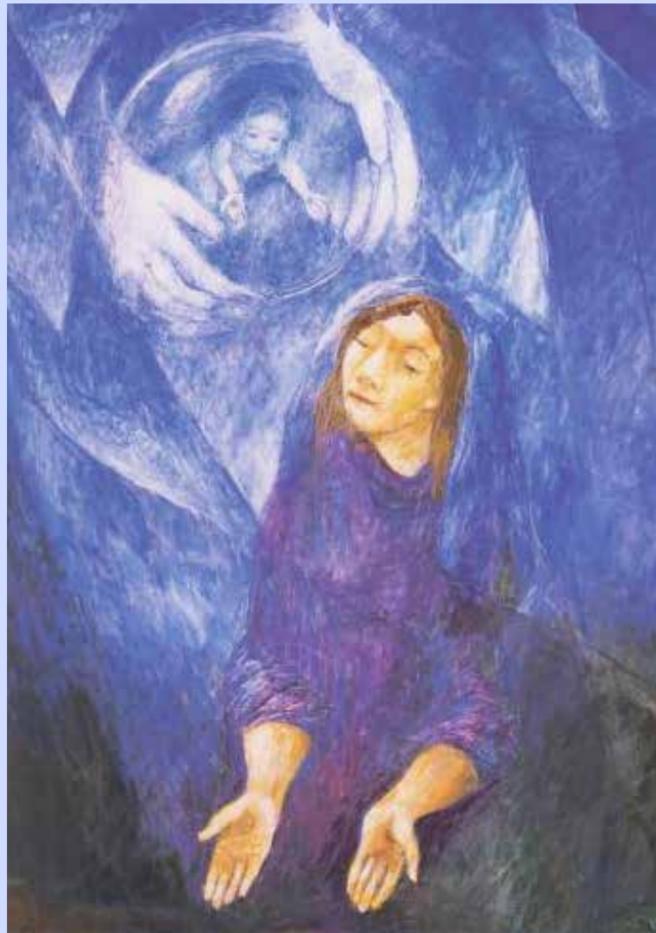
As I write on Advent Sunday the church is starting to prepare for Christmas. We have lit the first purple candle on our Advent wreath and remember Isaiah and other prophets of the Old Testament. In a couple of weeks we will think of John the Baptist. All those worthy men who tried to prepare people for the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah.

By the time you read this the season celebrating Jesus' birth will be almost upon us. And will we be ready? We may have done the shopping and made long lists of things yet to do. We will have put up our Christmas trees – forty of them in church. But will we be ready to meet Jesus when we come to worship in church?

The people who lived when Jesus was born 2000 years ago had taken the prophets' message of a Saviour (Messiah) and over time placed their own interpretation upon it. They moulded the promise to be what they wanted rather than what God longed to give them. When Jesus was born and later began ministering they were not prepared for what he had to say, even despite John's teaching. Many simply did not accept the good news of eternal life that he offered. They chose to live by different values than love, peace and compassion which Jesus taught and modelled himself.

How prepared are we for Christmas? Are we ready to receive Jesus into our hearts and homes afresh this Christmastide?

In order to be prepared it is good to take time out to be quiet and to think about the values that we live by. We might read the Old Testament scriptures of the promised Messiah and the story of Jesus' promise to Mary and Joseph. When the angel told Mary she would have a son, out of marriage and still a virgin, she prepared by



asking questions of God: 'how can this be?' and then she accepted God's promise and prepared for the birth by visiting an elderly, wise, relative for support.

At our Advent quiet day we looked at a Sieger Koder painting of Mary, hands open, accepting God's promise and waiting peacefully. God's promise of love in Jesus is offered to us all. Could we prepare for Christmas by opening our hands and our hearts to him?

## Receiving Jesus...

At Christmas we remember Jesus coming to us as a baby, but of course he did not stay a baby. As an adult he taught people and showed them about God's love – so great that he died for them (us) too. The night that he was arrested Jesus shared his last meal, possibly a Passover meal with his followers, and he asked them to share bread and wine to remember his loving death. Jesus' disciples have done that for the last 2000 years. We do it, every Sunday morning (and mid-week too).

Taking the bread and wine of communion into our open hands is to receive Jesus and to receive his strength as we live out our daily lives.

How to receive and who receives has varied over the 2000 years of Christian faith. Immediately after Jesus died whole families, all ages, received communion. With time the developing church placed limits on who might receive. The Church of England used to link being confirmed with being admitted to receive communion. Nowadays communion is seen much more as a time of affirming one's baptismal promises for oneself – a public confession of faith in God.

The Church is returning to the original practice of an open altar – for all ages and all people to be invited to receive Jesus for themselves. This church has permission for children of any age to receive and we will be inviting

everyone, adults and children, to do so for the first time at our All Age Communion service on 22 December. It seems right to join together as one family around a shared table. As we watch our children's nativity presentation and think of Mary taking the newborn Jesus into her arms and hands, so we open our hands to receive Jesus – together, with no limits. Those who receive as adults / older teens are encouraged to be confirmed at some right time.

Over five weeks in church we were given questions to think about for ourselves and to talk to each other about. I hope they have been helpful as we all prepare, in our own ways, to receive Jesus afresh in bread and wine.

## Question 1: what does it mean to you / me to receive holy communion?

This is very personal and answers may range through receiving spiritual strength to get through the week, to knowing Jesus' love more fully...

## Question 2: why do you think Jesus left us a meal to remember him by?

Everyone has to eat! A meal is a simple thing that we all do and can share together. Many celebrations have meals at their centre – personal sustenance and community sharing.

## Question 3: what is the link between Holy Communion and the Jewish Passover?

It may be that Jesus' last supper was a Passover meal and so he gave an ancient Jewish festival new meaning. Others think that it was on the eve of Passover and that Jesus was dying on the cross as the Passover lambs were being slaughtered in the Temple – a new, wholly perfect, lamb of God who died just once, preventing the need for any more animal offerings.

## Question 4: what is the Eucharistic prayer?

Eucharist is a Greek word meaning 'thanksgiving' and it is the long prayer said by the president (the leader, the one who hold everyone together) at which the bread and wine are consecrated (made holy). The prayer gives thanks for all that God has done for us as humans and it tells the story of Jesus living, dying and rising for us. It uses the words of Jesus himself at the last supper ('This is my body.....').

## Question 5: What symbolic actions does the president use during the service, and why?

The president uses a variety of actions to help explain what is going on and to make our service clear. Opening the hands (orans) to say prayers such as the collect, which are said on behalf of all the congregation, draws everyone into the prayer. During the Eucharistic prayer there are four key actions: taking the bread and wine, blessing them, breaking the bread, and giving them to the people. This is just what Jesus did at the last supper.

During Advent we prepare to receive Jesus, a tiny baby, God in our hearts. This year we also prepare, many for the first time, to receive him as bread and wine in our hands too. Either way, we receive him as Love Incarnate – for us.

I wish you a very happy Christmas and a blessed new year, and pray that as you open your hands to receive Jesus in bread and wine, your heart may be filled with his love and grace.

# In A Pickle

**Ben Darracott** helped at the Combined Charities Fair – but feels he didn't get the credit he deserved...

**O**n Saturday 3 November, we once again took our place at the Maidenhead Combined Charities Fair.

This event is always a great success. Not just for raising money, but meeting new people, or catching up with other stalwarts we've gotten to know.

The Mayor and Mayoress Andrew and Julia Jenner opened the show, and walked round, checking out what goodies were on offer.

Arriving at our stall, they found a decorative display of delicious delicacies. This seasonal selection included: marmalade, flavoured jelly and chutneys, as well as Christmas cakes, mince pies (I wonder who made those), plus shortbread and cookies.

Despite only catching a few minutes of their time, they were a very nice couple. I felt like saying: Ah Mr Mayor – we've been expecting you!

Another nice couple that dropped by, were Theresa May MP and her husband Philip. Even though Theresa is Home Secretary, Minister for Women and Maidenhead MP, she always lends her support here. Especially, purchasing a bag of mince pies.

Now, here is some serious news. A monumental mistake was made in the article in the *Maidenhead Advertiser*.

A caption to one of the photos wrongly states that our intrepid Editor Andrew Burdett, was manning the St. Luke's stall, when it was in fact me. He was actually holding a camera at the time, so that should have given the game away.

I'm not going to stand for this debacle, I said. So, I sat down.

The prize-giving was made in the afternoon, and guess who won 'Best Dressed Stall' for the third consecutive year?!

It's an honour to win this award. A big thank-you and well done, to all who made it happen.

Same again next year?



Mayor Andrew Jenner visited the St Luke's stall, and went on to name it 'Best Dressed' at the fair.

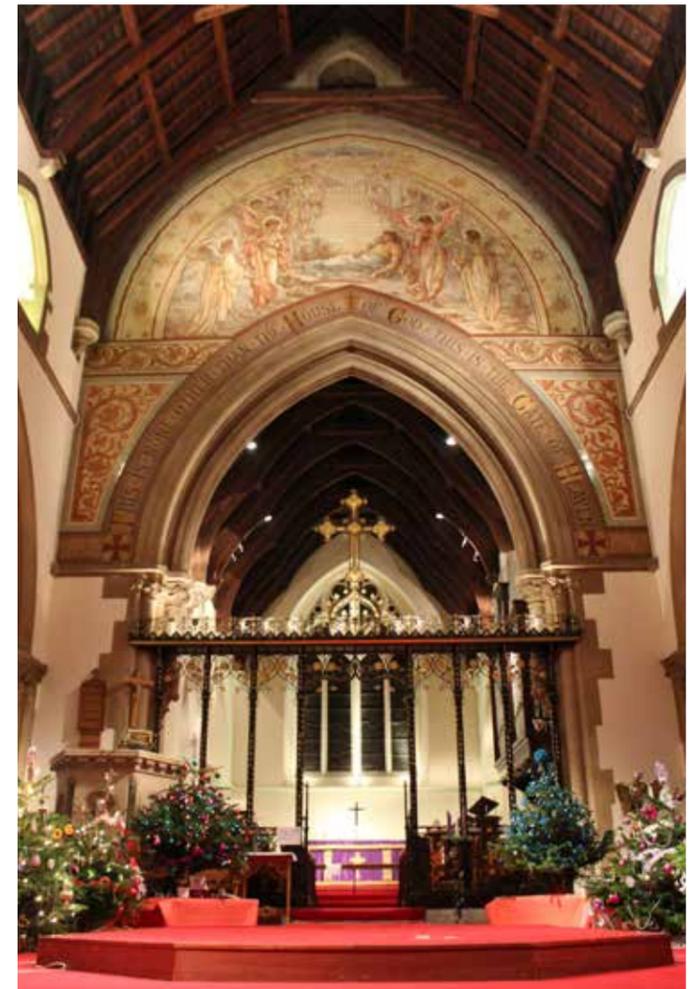


# CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

For the third year running, St Luke's Christmas Tree Festival saw the church filled with festive cheer. *InSpire* magazine's picture-special starts here.

**Photography: Andrew Burdett**







## A Christmas Poem

Adapted from Corinthians Chapter 13

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows,  
strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls,  
but do not show love to my family,  
I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen,  
baking dozens of Christmas cookies,  
preparing gourmet meals  
and arranging a beautifully adorned table at  
mealttime:  
but do not show love to my family,  
I'm just another cook.

If I work at a soup kitchen  
carol in the nursing home,  
and give all that I have to charity;  
but do not show love to my family,  
it profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels  
and crocheted snowflakes,  
attend a myriad of holiday parties  
and sing in the choir's cantata  
but do not focus on Christ,  
I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child  
Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the spouse  
Love is kind, though harried and tired  
Love doesn't envy another's home  
that has coordinated Christmas china and table  
linens.

Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way,  
but is thankful they are there to be in the way  
Love doesn't give only to those who are able to  
give in return;  
but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things,  
believes all things,  
hopes all things  
endures all things.

Love never fails  
Video games will break,  
pearl necklaces will be lost,  
golf clubs will rust;  
But giving the gift of love will endure.

Author unknown

## St Luke's: The Last 70-Odd Years

A REMINISCENCE IN NINE VICARS, BY ROGER AND JILLY BEVITT

PART THREE

IN THIS THIRD AND FINAL PART OF OUR EPISODICAL PUBLICATION OF THEIR ST LUKE'S MEMORIES,  
ROGER AND JILLY BEVITT RECALL THE PRIESTHOODS OF  
TONY STARBUCK (VICAR, 1982 TO 1987),  
DAVID WEST (VICAR, 1988 TO 1995),  
RICHARD HOLROYD (VICAR, 1996 TO 2010)  
WITH JUST A FEW WORDS ON SALLY LYNCH (VICAR, 2011 TO PRESENT).

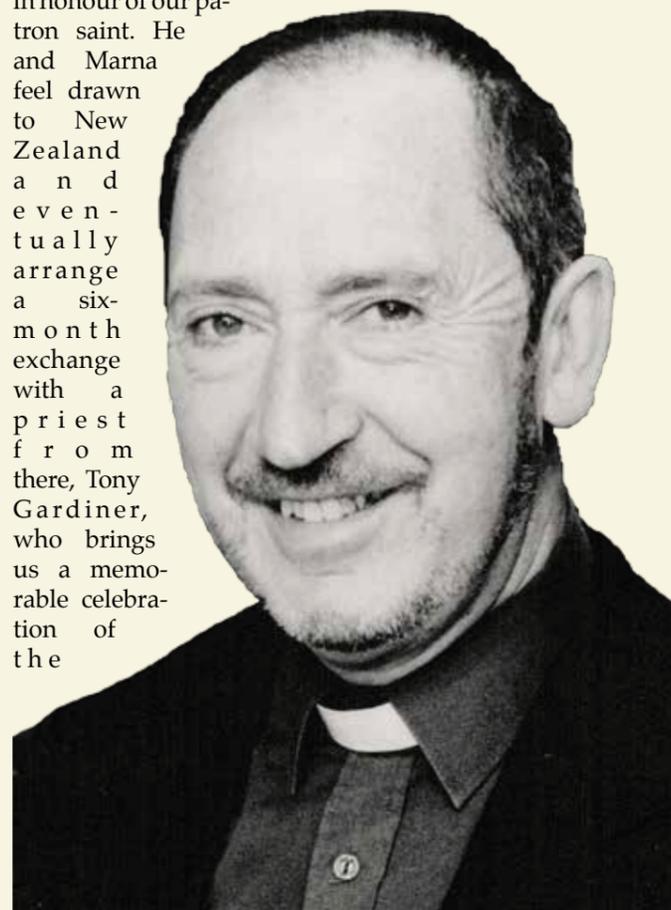
**I**t is 1982 and money for restoring the decaying St Luke's Hall is raised by demolishing the adjoining Verger's cottage and selling that land plus its garden as a site for three houses. The verger retires and is not replaced.

### FATHER TONY STARBUCK

**L**ater in the same year we are joined by Father Tony Starbuck, a quieter, more contemplative man who had spent the early years of his vocation in a monastery before later entering the Parish Ministry and marrying Marna from New Zealand.

Father Tony has a particular concern for the outcasts of society, but he also has a lighter, creative side, writing and performing in humorous sketches and writing the original words for the hymn we sing

in honour of our patron saint. He and Marna feel drawn to New Zealand and eventually arrange a six-month exchange with a priest from there, Tony Gardiner, who brings us a memorable celebration of the

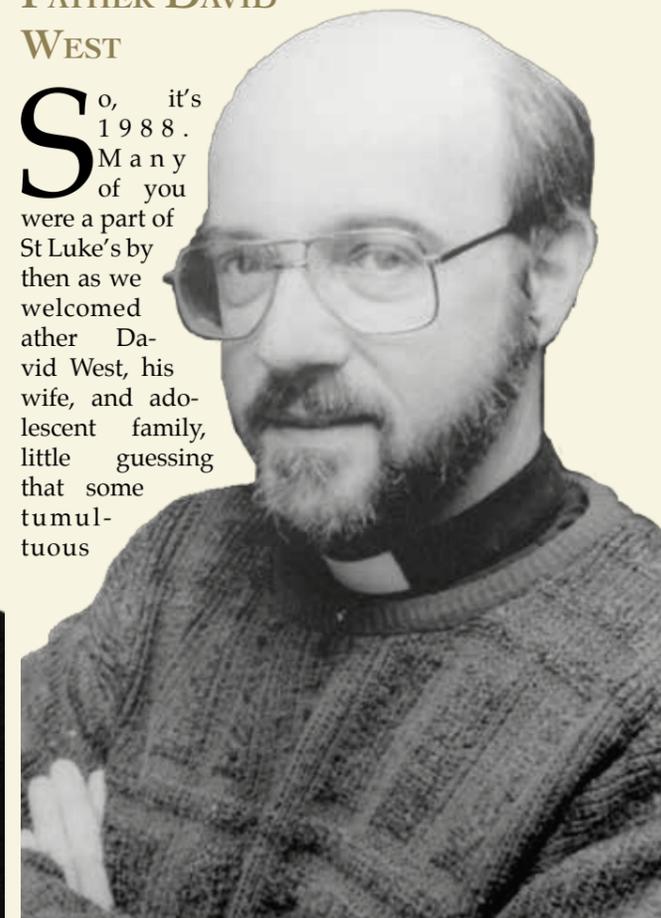


Passover meal and the exotic yellow flowered tree by the west gateway.

Others bring magnolia in the form of more paint to the inside of the church. The aisle walls have been painted as a DIY effort years before, but now it is arranged for a NACRO (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) working party to complete the coverage of the grey-brown surfaces of the higher nave walls. A churchwarden has the novel challenge of educating young offenders in the ways of suitable behaviour in church. On the return of Tony and Marna to the Parish we celebrate Tony's 25 years as a priest with a splendid flower festival, but both Tonys like what they have seen and shortly emigrate in opposite directions to pursue their vocations in a new country.

### FATHER DAVID WEST

**S**o, it's 1988. Many of you were a part of St Luke's by then as we welcomed Father David West, his wife, and adolescent family, little guessing that some tumultuous



times lay ahead.

The PCC had asked for a new priest who would shake us out of our complacency. The following words are from a review Jill wrote for the Parish Magazine some time after David joined us. 'His intense, deep spirituality is a beacon to us all in portraying a God of love but it masks a strong conviction that the path to Eternal Life is not easy and is full of potholes. He certainly dug a few for us during his early months in the parish. Over the years we had been indoctrinated with the idea "By your good works shall you be known" – but brownie points cut no ice with Fr. David.'

David and Jill used to argue like cat and dog but in retrospect he was the most caring Vicar to our family when times were difficult and his congregation in Reading prayed for her dying father.

The date of 19 January 1991 returns vividly to mind, not so much because it is Jill's 50th birthday but because at about 7.30 am the phone rings. Roger returns from answering it and the following conversation ensues.

Jill: "Who was that?"  
Roger: "Father David."

Jill: "He's early to wish me a happy birthday."

Roger: "He didn't. There's been a fire at the church and he wants us down as soon as possible to help sort out things from amongst the ashes."

It's a depressing site when we get there. The inside of the vestries has been destroyed. The door leading directly into the sanctuary is burnt through allowing the smell and staining of smoke to contaminate the whole church. A stained glass window in the north aisle is smashed where the arsonists got in. But if the flames had got just a little further and reached the back of the organ and hence the tower and the spire it would

# Young arsonists suspected after £50,000 fire destroys valuable records CHURCH BLAZE GUTS VESTRY



The morning after. Parishioners help to clear the fire-wrecked vestry.



The vicar, the Rev. David West, with the charred remains of ruined church documents.

By Sean O'Meara

**POLICE** are treating as arson a fire which gutted the vestry at St. Luke's Church, Maidenhead, in the early hours of Saturday morning causing £50,000 worth of damage and destroying valuable church records.

Firemen were called to the blaze at about

3.45 a.m., minutes after they had dealt with a burning truck in the nearby car park of St. Joseph's Church, a fire which police believe was probably started by the same arsonists, thought to be juveniles.

### FOUR APPLIANCES

Two fire appliances from Maidenhead were joined by two from Slough. Four fire fighters were sent in with breathing apparatus during

the hour-long effort to control the blaze and to prevent the flames spreading to the church itself.

Although the fire was confined to the vestry, smoke damage left the church unusable and services were moved temporarily to St. Luke's hall.

Within hours loyal parishioners had rallied round to help in the clear-up operation. The vicar, the Rev. David West, said he hoped services could return to the church on Sunday.

Some baptism and burial records, which go back to the

turn of the century, were saved but the church's processional cross and an irreplaceable collection of pictures of former vicars were destroyed.

### 'SHOCKED'

The intruders smashed a stained glass window dating back to 1871 to break into the church. Collection boxes were broken open and a small amount of cash stolen.

"We are talking about child's pocket money, not more than £4," said a shocked Mr. West, who was full of praise for the fire service.

"They were magnificent. We are grateful to other churches who have gathered round and have given bread and wine so that we can continue to worship. Already good is coming out of bad."

Commenting on the fire he said, "We are more sorry for the people who did this than we are for ourselves. The fact is it's possible for them to run away from the church but not from their conscience."

Anyone with information about the blaze should contact Det-sgt. Dickinson at Maidenhead police station.

ABOVE: HOW THE MAIDENHEAD ADVERTISER BROKE NEWS OF THE FIRE.

BELOW: WORK TO REBUILD THE VESTRY AS A PARISH CENTRE BEGINS.



have been much worse. On the positive side, the interior of the vestries would be reconstructed to give us the multi-functional Parish Centre along with the kitchen and the standard and disabled loos. Father David also initiates the drawing up of plans for re-ordering the back of the nave and introduces Assistant Churchwardens. In 1992 the Wives Group becomes The Thursday Fellowship. And who is the Leader?! Yes, thank you Sonya Clarke for your 21 years in that role.

After he left St Luke's, David West went on to serve as Curate and then Vicar of Christchurch, Reading where he remained until he retired a year ago.

While we wait for matters to be resolved we have a caretaker priest from California (Berks not the US) named Pam Burdon and this first experience of a woman priest is very re-assuring to almost all. Her husband, also a priest, provides the scary bit when on a church walk on one of the slushy snow covered peaks of Snowdonia, he loses his footing and the other five of us cling to our ice axes and watch helplessly as he rolls then bounces over a boulder strewn slope. What a relief it was when we found he was not seriously hurt.

## REVD RICHARD HOLROYD

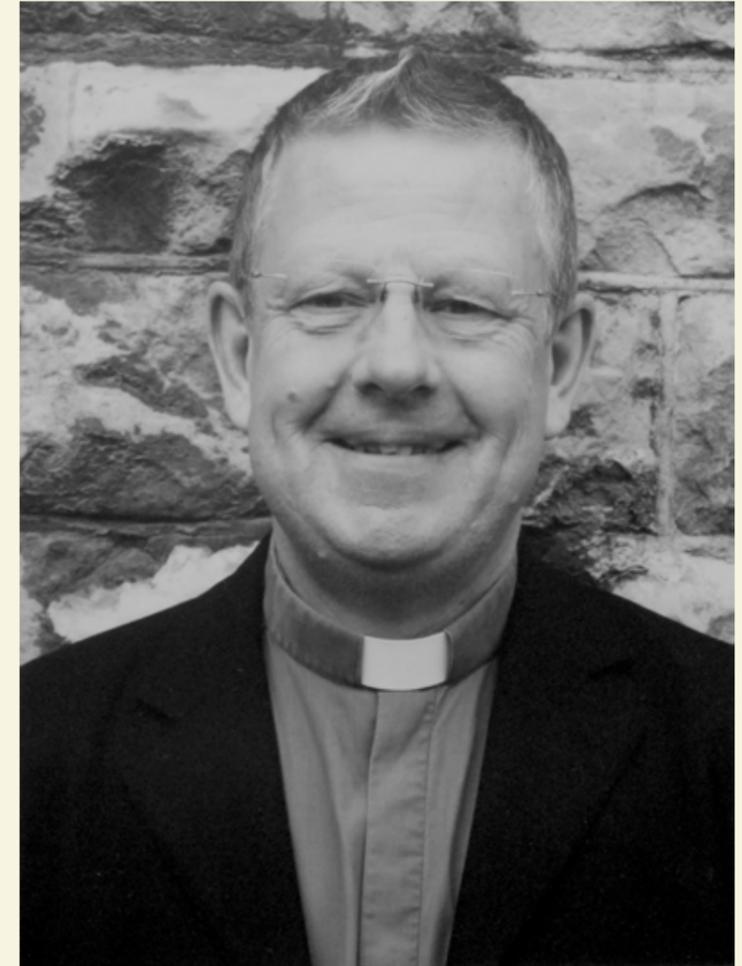
So we come to 1996 and Richard Holroyd, not a 'Father', not even a Vicar for his initial appointment of five years as Priest-in-Charge, but he turns out to be our longest serving incumbent since Canon Fry. By nature he is easy going, humble, slightly shy, artistic, liberal and inclusive. He spent some time before entering the Ministry as a music teacher and some time after that as the Precentor at Bury St Edmunds Cathedral so it is not surprising that serious music and the Choir take a more prominent position in worship with the new role of Musical Director added in the form of John Cotterill. Richard pushes forward the re-ordering of the chapel, with the altar moved away from the east-wall, the wonderful hanging created by a group of parishioners, carpeting and buttock friendly seating installed and the clergy/servers vestry divided off. He also leads a lot of idea and information gathering, for the more general re-ordering of the church.

## REVD SALLY LYNCH

In 2010 Richard leaves to take on a pair of churches in Bristol and in 2011 Sally Lynch joins us, our first woman Vicar – and unique in various other ways too.

Now, amongst all the changes, she's having to face up to the wide range of contrasting ideas on re-ordering and finding a place for a proper Parish office. We await to see what the church will look like by our 150th anniversary in 2016.

THE ON-GOING  
STORY OF ST LUKE'S  
CONTINUES, AND WE  
CAN ALL PLAY OUR  
PART.



# “Our aim is to give the courage to say ‘no’.”

**Johanna Raffan**, on behalf of the Thames Valley Soroptimists,

discusses the award-winning presentation she gave on FGM.

**S**oroptimist International Thames Valley Club supports three projects during the year, The Women’s Refuge (local), Breast Cancer Campaign Tissue Bank (national) and The Kori Development Project, Sierra Leone (International). We are small club of fourteen members, but with the help of many others, like the good people of St Luke’s, we achieve quite a lot.

The Kori Development Project started three years. The club had had a talk by Rose Simbo on Female Genital Mutilation and were so appalled by the statistics that we wanted to help. Rose became a member of our club and in discussion she said that we needed to give the women independence, to empower them. She suggested that we should provide tools and seeds to enable the women to farm, so we provided the tools plus cassava, sweet potato, okra and peanut seeds and, with a parcel of land donated by the local Chief, 50 women started farming. When they harvested we told them to use a 1/3 for food, sell 1/3 and keep a 1/3 for replanting. At a later date we also provided 9 sacks of rice seeds which at its first harvest yielded 64 sacks of rice. We continued to provide tools but otherwise the project is self sufficient and now three years later we have 7 villages involved and 1500 women farming.

In the meanwhile a school in Vancouver was having a French lesson for the 14 year olds and they had a discussion about FGM. The pupils were appalled and asked what could they do, the teacher spoke to the Deputy Head, who was the Vice President of SI Vancouver Club and through International HQ was put in touch with our club. Rose skyped the class and the result was a donation of 4500 dollars. We have used this for micro loans, especially for the circumcisers, as this gives them independence and status.

For the last three years we have sent out a part container of clothes, bedding, blankets, toys, cooking utensils etc. This year it was a full 25 ton container. Last year’s container had new clothes, presents, sweets etc for the girls for the initiation ceremony. This is a very important three day celebration, that usually ends with the girls being cut, and if they refused they could not continue in school. Hence our main aim of the project is give the Mothers and Grandmothers the courage to say NO, a very difficult thing in their culture. In the village of Taiama, where we started work three years ago, nearly 100 girls were not cut at the Christmas initiation ceremony. We are hoping it will be more this year in the other 6 villages.

Much of what we had set in motion is now self sufficient and Rose said that she would like to build a Birth Clinic, as the mortality rate is appallingly high. But the villagers said they wanted a library to educate the children and the villagers. Our first fund raising activity was a Quiz night run by Sandy, three days before he had his brain haemorrhage. Hence the reason why the villagers said it should be called the Sandy Raffan Memorial Library (he would have loved that as he was a prolific reader, he would even read the Corn-



flakes box if there was nothing else to read!) Then in November we launched an appeal and had raised £2000 by Christmas so the foundations could be laid. To date we are up to the roof and with the £10,000 we have raised, so far, the roof will go on in the New Year. We now need another £4000 to put in windows, doors, generator, tables, chairs and shelving. Then, of course books!

At our Federation Conference each year, in the five sections we work under, four projects are chosen as examples of good practice and one in each category one is chosen as the best for

that section and then there is an overall award for the Best Practice. At Conference this year, in Gateshead, we were surprised to find we had been nominated in two categories – Economic Empowerment for the work with the farms and Violence & Conflict Resolution for empowerment against FGM. In fact we won both categories plus the overall Best Practice – it was amazing as no one has ever been nominated in two sections before!

We would like to thank everyone at St Luke’s for all your support and help - the award is as much yours as it is ours.

## What is Soroptimist International?



**S**oroptimist International is a vibrant, dynamic organisation for today’s women. We are committed to a world where women and girls together achieve their individual and collective potential, realise aspirations and have an equal voice in creating strong and peaceful communities worldwide. Soroptimists educate with skills and empower women and girls with confidence giving them the ability to achieve their fullest potential. Looking beyond the individual, Soroptimists work locally and globally to enable opportunities through advocacy and awareness raising so that women and girls can use their skills and confidence as leaders and role models in the wider community.

Soroptimism is a world-wide membership organisation in 129 countries, its grass roots are local clubs that link into a Region and in turn these regions link in to a Federation. There are four federations in the world and we are part of SI Great Britain and Ireland, which in reality is the Commonwealth, and comprises of 29 countries from around the world. Soroptimist International has NGO status to the United Nations, UNESCO and the World Council of Women so we have a voice in some very important places.

The main objective for Soroptimism is Programme Action, all clubs around the world undertake activities to educate empower and enable women and girls. This work is done under five headings – Food Security & Healthcare, Learning Opportunities, Environmental Sustainability, Economic Empowerment and Violence & Conflict Resolution.

# Musical Notes

Director of Music **John Cotterill** shares the success of two young choristers.

**O**n Advent Sunday, our two young choristers, Sophie Cooper and Hattie Price, were presented with their light blue ribbons, certificates and badges under the first stage of the Royal School of Church Music 'Voice for Life' scheme. This achievement was reached after completion of a course of almost weekly lessons for the last year on music theory and choral singing technique, during which they both worked very hard. I have found



Photograph: Matt Price

it a real joy to teach them and to watch their progress to a stage where they are now becoming valuable members of the Choir. They will now go on to the second stage leading to dark blue ribbons.

We still need more voices in the Church Choir, so do please come forward if you feel at all inclined or if you know

who might. I am always ready to explain to anyone interested what is entailed. As I have said before, there is much enjoyment and health to be derived from singing, and it is a very positive and satisfying way by which to worship. Fine examples of this were the Choir's excellent singing of Choral Evensong on 20 October and at the Remembrance Service on 20 November. With regret, Malcolm Moulton decided in September for health reasons that he could no longer give the commitment to singing with the Choir, and after some ten years of service we are very sorry to lose him. On Advent Sunday, the Choir was invited to join the choir of All Saints Church for their Advent Carol Service there, a satisfying and enjoyable occasion.

Our new Organ Scholar from Eton College this year is Alex Tucker who started with us in September and is already coping well with choir practices and morning services on two weekends a month during term-time. Rhidian, of course, covers most of the others, but we are always grateful for the help of other organists/and pianists when neither he nor the Organ Scholar is available.

A splendid lunchtime concert by Genevieve Usher (soprano) and Gillian Salmon (piano) was enjoyed by an appreciative audience

# Coming Through Loud and Clear

As a hearing-aid user, **Roger Bevitt** offers his first-hand advice on getting the most out of the sound system installed at St Luke's.

**Why isn't the church system as good as those in cinemas and theatres?**

These systems simply need to amplify the desired sound that comes from a single professional source (the film track or the actors on the stage) and distribute this to the audience. In contrast, the situation is much more complex in church, where there are many sources of sound, of which some have been chosen for amplification by having microphones placed in certain fixed locations (e.g. the lectern), or attached to certain people who move around during a service. These microphones pick up not only the wanted sound (e.g. a reading) but also coughs,

in Church on 26 September. Lunchtime concerts here are proving to be quite popular since the Music Festival last June, and at the time of writing, the return visit of the River City Saxes on 13 December at the start of the Christmas Tree Festival is eagerly awaited.

It is always good to have feedback from the congregation about the music at St Luke's, and what I hear is usually appreciative and encouraging, so many thanks for that. As always, I am most grateful to Clare for her help as Music Department Administrator and for the support given by Sally, Rhidian and the members of the Choir. Rest assured there will be plenty more good music to come!

rustles, and whispers from the congregation.

**Is our sound system perfect? Can it be improved?**

No, it is not perfect and I contend that it cannot be, both because of the complexity of our situation and because we all have different needs. With microphones scattered around the church, more than moderate amplification leads to feedback, and even if we could achieve cinema sound levels and please those who are deaf but won't wear their hearing aids, others who were not actually in pain might still consider the loudness inappropriate to meditative prayers.

We could install a soundboard to give instant control, but even then you would not get what you really wanted, just the operator's perception of the best compromise to suit the congregation as a whole. We would also need a team of skilled operators willing to be unable to fully participate in services.

Some small technical improvements continue to be made. For instance, since the time when the youngest members of the congregation and their parents moved nearer the front of the nave the inevitable sounds they make have been amplified through the microphone on the legillum that we use for the notices at the end of services. This has now been fitted with a switch so that it can be muted when not in use. If you have ideas for other improvements, please let our Sound Manager, Dave Sopp, know.

**How can we get the best out of the system?**

Below, I offer suggestions to various groups of people: some are those who contribute to what goes into the system, some are those who listen to what comes out. Like most systems you can only get quality output if you have quality input.

**Organisers**

If a new person is added to the Lesson Readers or Intercessors Rota it is up to you to make sure that they are given basic training in using a microphone and a trial to hear how he/she performs in practice. This will avoid the natural reaction of being stunned to a whisper when one first hears one's amplified voice, and allow

suitable arrangements to be made for those who are not tall enough to reach the microphone or read the book on the lectern.

In contrast you may be directing a dramatic or musical production with hand held or fixed microphones in new positions. Never do this without a proper rehearsal using the full kit.

If you are dealing with the youngest of people or inviting people up out of the congregation, please think about training yourself in interviewing technique where you continually move a hand held microphone between the optimum position for yourself and that for each of the other individuals.

**The Microphone Users**

So you've been trained. Your greatest asset now is a candid and somewhat deaf friend/relative who can be asked to comment on your performance in practice and give you regular updates. Check before the service/event that the microphone is in the right position for you and switched on. If possible read a few words to get the volume right. If using the legillum check the microphone is turned off except when needed.

**Those who do not use Hearing Aids**

There are loudspeakers distributed widely around the church so for most of you the only choice is to use what comes through the sound system, and for sounds that are not being amplified to sit nearer to desired and/or further from undesired sound sources. There is one other choice a few of you should now be making - to have your hearing tested and make the difficult decision to join the next group:

**Hearing Aid Users**

I've been a member of this group since I was in my thirties and without my NHS behind the ear equipment these years of my life would have been much emptier. As indicated earlier on, we hearing aid users are the lucky ones in our church. The rest

of the congregation have to use the sound they are given. With a hearing aid you can choose the sound level and choose to select what is spoken into the microphone as the dominant sound with other noise muted out.

Now, I know several people, including friends at St. Luke's, who have hearing aids but don't wear them. So

the first thing I would say is put



them on and persevere. They have small controls which you need to learn how and when to adjust, and be able to do it while you are wearing them. It takes time to learn how to get the best out of hearing aids in various situations. Do talk to me if you are having difficulties with this or other aspects of hearing aid use and I'll try to help, even if it's only to advise seeing your audiologist to re-programme your equipment to better fit your needs.

So, you're in church with the 10.00 a.m. or other service in the main body of the church about to start. The loop system should be turned on, so turn your hearing aid to 'T', the loop setting, and you should find that the introductory remarks/notices are louder with less background noise. Adjust your volume control to obtain the easiest, clearest listening and use this 'T' setting for all those parts of services such as prayers, readings, sermons, that are being spoken directly into microphones. At other times you will want to switch your aid back to the normal setting so that you can hear your neighbours during hymn singing, at the Peace or if you think what they are whispering may be more interesting than the sermon.

At the end of the Service don't forget to go back to the normal setting or, if you are off for coffee and a chat, you may find your aid has a 'directionality' setting which will help you by boosting sound from in front of you while reducing the distracting noises that are all around you.

# Thursday Group Update

Thursday Group Secretary, **Sonya Clarke**, gives her usual round-up of news from the Thursday Group.

Since the last edition of *InSpire*, Thursday Group has enjoyed its summer party held at the home of Jean Tyrwhitt-Drake, and we were blessed with a beautiful evening. Our thanks go to Jean for having opened her home.

At the AGM, which was held in July, I informed the members that this would be my last year as Leader/Secretary. This was not a decision I came to lightly, but having served the group in this capacity for over twenty years I really feel the time has come for someone new to take over and hopefully bring in fresh vibrant ideas. If you think this might be of interest to you, then please feel free to contact me and we can have a chat. However, that being said, we have a full year to look forward to.

September as usual was our enrolling evening, where we welcomed representatives from both Alzheimer's Support and Sequalea Foundation, to receive cheques to the value of £400.00 each. I have always felt that this is a magnificent amount raised by such a small group, and I can't remember during my time as Leader that for two consecutive years the same charities have been nominated as our chosen charity to fundraise for.

At our October meeting we welcomed a guest speaker to talk about the work of Shoe Box Appeal. This was a very informative evening which gave a good insight as to how this charity started and what is needed to fulfil its role. A short DVD was shown of some children receiving their boxes, and to see the joy and wonder on their faces and in their eyes was a joy in itself to behold.

November found us with a Christmas theme. Julianne Groblar demonstrated the art of laying a beautiful Christmas dinner table. The simplicity was wonderful and the effect stunning. The evening was one of

Luke Darracott, once Head Chorister at St Luke's, will be talking to the Thursday Group on 16 January 2014 about his recent walk of the pilgrim routes to Santiago de Compostela (St James of Compostela).

Luke started walking on 6 April (complete with a badly-sprained ankle acquired when back home over Easter) and finished on 25 May. Over the 51 days, he covered a total of 760 miles. This was broken down into three sections.

1) Santander to Irun (both in Spain); 181 miles. He then transferred from Irun to St Jean de Pied Port by bus.

2) St Jean de Pied Port (France) to Santiago de Compostela (Spain); 504 miles (the main pilgrim route)

3) Santiago de Compostela to Finistera & Muxia; 75 miles.



In each place that Luke stayed overnight (usually in pilgrim hostels) he obtained a stamp in his pilgrim's passport. He explains the process of obtaining the passport in *Camino Introduction*, one of his early videos on YouTube. Using his phone, he uploaded a video every two days resulting in 25 videos that show the different areas and weather he walked through. These can be seen by searching 'Luke Darracott' on YouTube.

He is now at home in Maidenhead writing up his experiences for a new book.

relaxation and enjoyment.

December will find us carol singing as usual, first on the 12 December at Southgate House and part of the parish and again on the 19 December starting at Neve House and continuing around another part of the parish, both evenings being a Thursday. Each time we will return to church for refreshments of mulled wine and mince pies. All are very welcome to come along, this is our opportunity in taking the true spirit of Christmas to those who live within the parish. We meet at church for a 7:00pm departure and aim to get back for about 9:00pm. Please come along if you can.

We then start to look forward to 2014. On 20 February, Martin Trepte, editor of the *Maidenhead Advertiser*, will give a talk about his work. On 20 March, we have another guest speaker, Mr John Moore OBE, who will give a talk entitled 'When Sport was Fun'.

Thursday Group is open to anyone who would like to come along. We ask guests to contribute £2, to help cover the guest speakers' fees and the cost of the light refreshments.

If you've not been before, why not come along to any of the dates mentioned above and see what a friendly lively bunch we are? I can promise you a very warm welcome. Should transport be a problem then please contact me (Sonya on 01628 632626).

I look forward to seeing as many of you as is possible over the coming months, but at this time of year, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Committee who work tirelessly to help run our group, and also those who have supported Thursday Group so loyally. My hope is that we may all enjoy a most blessed and peaceful Christmas and may the love of the Christ Child fill our hearts.

# HERITAGE OPEN DAY

St Luke's very own historian, **Ann Darracott**, recalls St Luke's involvement with the latest Heritage Open Day.

Words and photographs: **Ann Darracott**

For over a decade St Luke's has participated in Heritage Open Days (HODS), initially organised by the Civic Trust and now by an alliance of the Civic Voice, the National Trust and the Heritage Alliance, supported by English Heritage. The purpose is to have buildings open to the public that either are not normally open or usually make a charge. This year the St Luke's team volunteered to open St John the Baptist Church in Shottesbrooke Park for HODS for the first time. It was a collaborative effort involving the Landmark Trust, the church, St Luke's, and Maidenhead Civic Society.

The event was a great success, we expected 40 visitors and got 123!



The St Luke's team acted as guides and served teas in the Garden Cottage next door to the church. The visitor response forms gave their visit the highest rating with the knowledgeable guides, delicious teas and welcoming tea ladies getting a special mention. Lady Smith who lives in the manor house nearby was very impressed with the way the tearoom was organised. Many thanks to the tea ladies led by Sally Somerville and the guides for helping make the event a success.

Copies of the history trail written for the event, have been deposited with the Church Warden of St John the Baptist, Bob Packer so that future visitors can learn about the church.

A few weekends ago I travelled south of London to attend a family birthday celebration and visited St Andrews Church, Kingswood (right). Surreally it is a replica of St John the Baptist, even the weather vanes are identical! However, whereas the church in Shottesbrooke is a genuine C14th church, St Andrews is a Victorian replica, consecrated in 1852.

We arrived just after morning service had finished so very fortunately I was able to chat to their archivist. Apparently the founder of St Andrews Church, Thomas Alcock, was a frequent house guest of the Vansittart family at Shottesbrooke Park and had wor-

Left: St John the Baptist church, Shottesbrooke. It's probably the best 14th Century church in Berkshire, founded in 1337.

Right: St Andrew's Church, Kingswood, a Victorian replica of the Shottesbrooke Church, consecrated in 1852.

shipped in the church there. Those of you who have visited the church will remember that there are many Vansittart memorials there; the Smith family being descendants of the Vansittarts.

Thomas was so taken with the building he decided to have an exact replica built in Kingswood, hiring the architect Benjamin Ferrey, a pupil of Pugin, to take charge of the project. It is a replica both externally and internally though according to the organist of St Andrew's, who has played the organ in both churches, the acoustics at St John the Baptist are better.

It is said that the Victorians saw the revival of Gothic architecture as a means of reviving the Anglican church.



# A Visit to Ripon

**Gill Curry** visits Ripon, the location for some *Downton Abbey* scenes – and the new home of a friend's canon brother.

**M**y religious upbringing was partly in the Methodist Church, so I have friends in both denominations. Recently, the younger brother of a friend whom I have long known, was installed as an honorary canon in the Anglican Cathedral at Ripon in Yorkshire. This was an ecumenical appointment for his work alongside the Dean and Bishop of Ripon.

Stephen Burgess, whom I have known since he was in a pushchair, is the Chairman of the York and Hull district of the Methodist Church. He is also responsible for the churches and chapels in Leeds and the Dales. His role involves endless meetings and miles of driving, some of it in beautiful countryside. The Anglican and Methodists churches have been working together on a joint initiative for the youth in these areas. His background as a chemistry teacher and a master of tall sailing ships owned by a charitable trust, which aims to help groups of young people, means that he has an ideal background for this work.

So his sister Pauline and I set off in my newish car for a flying one-night visit. It was noticeably colder as we walked through Ripon searching for a tea shoppe. We found a good one called 'Heaven', and were suitably sustained by cakes as we strolled round this small city, which looked good even in the dark. I would like to go on a longer visit, preferably in the sunshine.

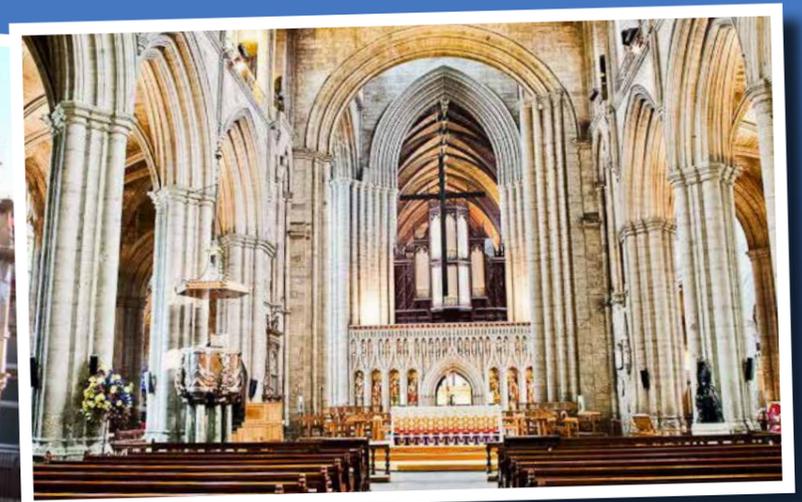
The cathedral has many modern features, noticeably the glass entrance doors, an elegant wooden staircase, and a beautiful screen in a side chapel. Although it is one of the oldest stone buildings in the area, it was surprisingly warm and the staff we met were very welcoming. The choir for this service were men with a large group of young girl choristers. Their choir school has recently had to close, so they are all recruited from the local schools. We wondered if there was an important football match on, as the boys appeared to have been given a night off!

The service was in the beautiful and more traditionally styled chancel, and an army chaplain was also being installed as a junior canon. He had worked all over the world, but was now attached to the local army barracks. The congregation of supporters was not large, but that didn't matter as the atmosphere was very special. There was even a canon lawyer, dressed in his wig and Victorian style 'costume'. The atmosphere of this beautifully-lit cathedral was clean and light, with many different styles of architecture. As one of the staff said: "We have never been a rich cathedral, so have added new extensions whenever we could."

Stephen looked very smart in his Ripon red cassock, but is not sure if it would be wise to wear this in some of the more traditional of his Methodist chapels and churches. He read the prayers in the service, which had an atmosphere like a family gathering.

Afterwards there were drinks and snacks in the main part of the church, and everyone mingled well, with lots of chat and banter. The Methodists that I know drink moderate amounts of alcohol, when in a social context, which I think surprised some of the Anglicans. So perhaps this closer link will bring them all up to date on things that have changed. We then went back to Stephen and Barbara's house in York with other members of the family. There, we had an Indian takeaway meal, plus another celebratory glass of wine. I also knew Barbara's family when I was a growing up, so it was really nice to catch up again.

But as a southerner I would urge you to visit Ripon and its cathedral if you are in the area. It may not be as grand as York Minster, but they are very welcoming and do not charge visitors an entrance fee!





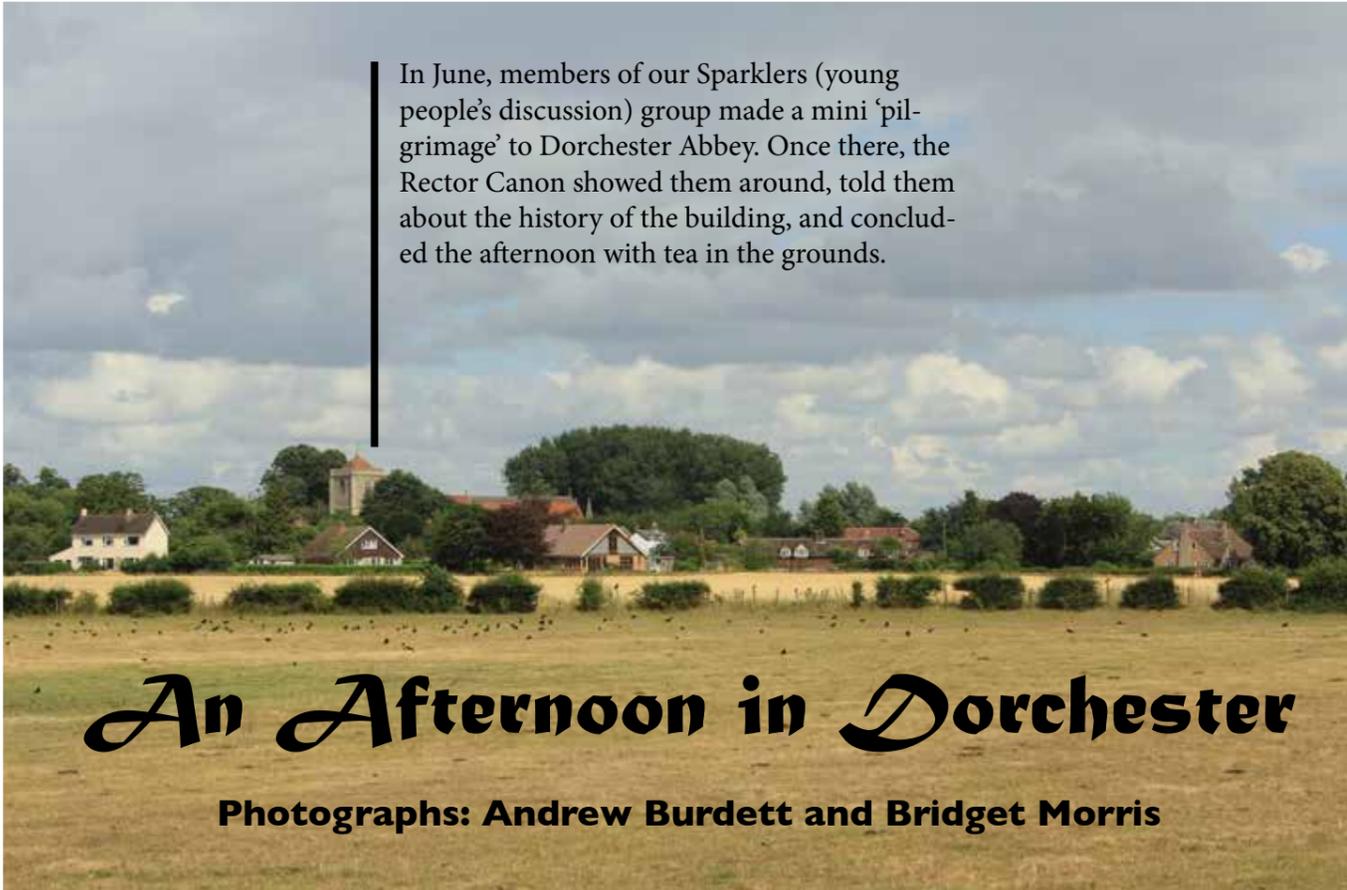
# Sunday Club at the Fire Station



Children and big kids alike enjoyed the Sunday Club's visit to Maidenhead Fire Station in November.



In June, members of our Sparklers (young people's discussion) group made a mini 'pilgrimage' to Dorchester Abbey. Once there, the Rector Canon showed them around, told them about the history of the building, and concluded the afternoon with tea in the grounds.



## An Afternoon in Dorchester

Photographs: Andrew Burdett and Bridget Morris



## Seeking Solace

A support group for the bereaved, with chat over refreshments followed by a short time of reflection.

Meeting on: Sunday 9 February,  
Monday 7 April, Sunday 1 June,  
Monday 4 August, Sunday 12 August,  
Sunday 12 October,  
Monday 1 December.

Sonya Clarke (01628 632626)

## Intercessory Prayer Group

Our Prayer Group continues to meet



on the first Wednesday of every month in church from 3:00pm. All are very welcome to come along and share quiet time in the presence of our Lord.

It is an opportunity for us to make time for ourselves, as well as coming to God. It's a very informal group where we share a scripture reading, a time of quiet and space, and a time of prayer.

Sonya Clarke (01628 632626)

# From the Registers

## We welcomed into God's church in baptism:

Lilly Bo Morgan  
Taya-Macie Davies-Elsbury  
Felicity Pearce  
Toby Mace  
Bethany Langran  
Grace McLaughlin  
Emma Deakin  
Poppy Shaw  
Pauline Shaw  
Rosa McLeod  
Carla McLeod  
Philippa Warwick  
Cameron Bradley  
Layla-Skye Janack

## We celebrated the marriages of:

James Hallam and Margaret Kiernan  
Robert Bennett and Hayley Flynn

## We commended into God's care at their funerals:

Marcus Lawes  
James Herbert  
Barbara Prior  
Vera Velvick  
Bessie Martin  
Patricia Walker  
Peter Emmons  
Christopher Griffiths  
Ada Rolls  
Barbara Ward  
Paul Luxton  
Christia Blight  
John Avenell



**Vicar:**  
Revd Sally Lynch



**Associate Priest:**  
Revd Terrie Robinson



**Licensed Lay Minister:**  
Sonya Clarke

## The Church Office

Open Tuesdays and Fridays,  
9:30am to 12:30pm.

admin@stlukeschurchmaidenhead.org.uk

☎ 01628 622733

# Who's Who at St Luke's?

### Ministry Team

Reverend Sally Lynch 01628 783033  
Reverend Terrie Robinson 01628 634107  
Sonya Clarke 01628 632626

### Churchwardens

Shula Tajima 01628 546889  
Barbara Essam 01628 782894

### Assistant Churchwardens

Ben Darracott 01628 620280  
Don Luff 01628 630833

### Flower Organiser

Joan Harnby 01628 622140

### Electoral Roll Officer

Jill Bevitt 01628 633464

### Gift Aid Secretary

Ann Cooke 01628 472147

### Director of Music

John Cotteril 01628 636514

### PCC Secretary

Ralph Hinchliffe 01628 784724

### PCC Treasurer

Richard Burdett 01628 631486

### Parish Administrator

Sue Brett 01628 622733

## The Church Website



To view the latest pew-sheet, learn about the history of our church, or find out about the church's many prayer and discussion groups,

**find us online at**

**→ [www.stlukeschurchmaidenhead.org.uk](http://www.stlukeschurchmaidenhead.org.uk)**

## And Finally...

At the pearly gates, a taxi driver and minister are waiting in line. St Peter consults his list and says to the taxi driver: "Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

St Peter next greets the minister saying: "Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

"Just a minute," says the minister. "That man was a taxi driver, and he gets a silken robe and golden staff, while I get a cotton robe and wooden staff. How can this be?"

"Up here, we work by results," says St. Peter. "While you preached, people slept; while he drove, people prayed."

*Seen by Harriet Burdett in the magazine of Reid Memorial Church, Edinburgh*