

Ploughshare April/May 1997

(scanned version from the original)

From the Rector

Significant things will happen during the life-time of this edition of Ploughshare.

First, the **GENERAL ELECTION**. Amidst all the razzmatazz, a lot is at stake. We need to be responsible citizens. It is most important to pray that God will guide both the nation as a whole, in choosing this next government and each of us individually as we vote. And we must use our vote

My own perspective, like everyone else's is inevitably biased. The country seems to be crying out for a change. It is unhealthy to have an opposition with no experience of government. In addition it appears to be a fundamental Christian responsibility to side with the powerless and to try to stop the poor getting poorer while the rich get richer. As Bishop Jonathan wrote in the March Derby Diocesan News, "*A greedy self-centred culture is likely to return a government which trampled on the weak.*"

I realise the issues are far from straightforward, especially for a Christian person seeking to be a responsible voter. The party which seems to side more with the poor seems also to be weaker in standing for Christian private morality and family values.

The organisation called **CARE** (Christian Action, Research and Education) has produced an excellent pack entitled "Make the cross count". It highlights many of the crucial issues facing our country - and all parliamentary candidates. Anyone can get a free pack by ringing (01711 221 4717).

We plan to hold an Election Forum at St Thomas' on a Sunday evening, as we did before the last election. It will be an opportunity to meet all the candidates and to ask them about their stance on issues that concern us.

Secondly, **TWO TREMENDOUS CHRISTIAN FESTIVALS**. I love joining in festivals in this parish; they seem to be more meaningful than I have experienced elsewhere.

EASTER is undoubtedly the festival of festivals, celebrating the greatest event in history. Its greatness is because it affects human life so profoundly. Because we can be sure that Jesus rose from the dead, we can be sure that His life's mission has been accomplished. He has won our eternal destiny. The Christian, with his or her hope securely placed in Jesus has real, unshakeable security. He "has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

Nothing can take heaven away from me. "Nothing", says the Apostle Paul, "can separate me from the love of God". Therefore I can face everything, whatever my nightmare may be: redundancy, divorce, hospital, relegation (football fans!), burglary, huge pressure, the wrong party winning the election, a fireread 1 Peter 1:3-5. Easter is a time for joy, hope, celebration.

PENTECOST is less well appreciated and we need to learn to make more of it. After Jesus returned to heaven, God sent His Spirit, also known as the Spirit of Jesus, to every believer. That day, the Day of Pentecost, the Gospel of Jesus was preached for the first time and thousands were converted. The Church came into being. The lives of those who followed Jesus were transformed with a new power and a new awareness of the presence of God. Three huge things to celebrate: the glorious Gospel, the birthday of the church, and the powerful Spirit of God available to all of us.

It's going to be a momentous time over the next few weeks.

Christopher Frith

Link Mission Partners Andy and Mandy Lines

Andrew, Mandy, Alex, Zoe and Elizabeth Lines have now returned from their holiday in Brazil. Please pray for them all but especially for Andrew and Mandy as they return to their work in Asuncion, and that their change of role in the mission field will soon be decided.

Richard and Dorothy Banks

St Thomas' Development Update

Garden of Remembrance

The design for the Garden of Remembrance is now complete. By the time Ploughshare is published four contractors will have been asked to tender for the work. They will have been asked to consider an offer from Touchstone to do the site clearance work. If all goes to plan the first stage of the work consisting of new paths, a lawn for the interment of ashes, a low wall to bear the names of those whose ashes are interred, a fenced play area outside the meeting room and planting will be completed in the spring.

A second stage is likely in the autumn when the memorial stones will be moved to their new position and the hedge planted around them. Some minor finishing work to one of the paths will also be required. This phasing of the work will allow interested parties to have an idea of where the stones are going before they are moved. We are writing to all these people to explain the details.

Re-ordering of the Interior

The Diocesan Advisory Committee responded fairly positively to our architect's proposals with the exception of those concerning the font. Here the DAC is at variance with what we take to be the general preference of the church. We have written more fully to the DAC explaining how we view baptism and its place in the life of our church. Meanwhile the architects have completed their design which will be considered at the March DAC meeting. Hopefully we can still complete the formalities in time to do the work in the autumn.

Face to face with Karen Herrick

Karen Herrick is mother to Emma (9), Jonathan (7) and Bethany (2) and wife to Philip, our former coordinator. She is a teacher and artist and has just taken over the running of St Thomas Sunday Club from Julie Malin.

Where were you brought up, Karen?

My Dad was in the Army, which meant we moved around. I was born in Kent and spent some time in Germany and Lincolnshire. When Dad came out of the Army we settled in Gainsborough.

How did you meet Philip?

His garden backed onto ours! His brother, Andy, was the Youth Group Leader. Philip was organist at the parish church and I was a Sunday School teacher. One day he asked me to accompany him on a trip to Cambridge - and it went on from there.

What did you do after school?

I desperately wanted to go to Art College and so, against all advice, I went straight after my 'O' levels. Then I realised that I couldn't get touch further without 'A' levels and so I took a one year course at the Technical College. After a year at Art College I found that I wanted to use my art to help others rather than pursue a career in art so I decided to train as a teacher. I taught full time before family but now juggle part-time teaching at Brampton Infant School with commitments at home.

How did your Christian faith come about?

When I was about 8, we started going to church as a family. There was an enthusiastic new curate who invited us when organising a door-to-door visiting programme. A fine Christian couple, Brian and Marjorie Morgan were at the church. They were real people of God and this made a lasting impression on me. When old enough, I joined a strong

ecumenical youth group and Andy and his fellow leaders stood out as having something special. After I made a commitment to Jesus, I remember I didn't feel particularly changed but my friends at school noticed that there was something different.

Your third child has had serious problems. How is Bethany?

Better than she was. She was born with a ruptured and malformed bowel and she had four lengthy operations in her first six months. The bowel is now rejoined but very short and her body can't absorb nutrients like most people's can. We follow strict feeding patterns and diets plus the added complication of overnight pump feeds! Nevertheless she is making slow progress and at long last is at least trying to eat. Most of her nutrition is still tube fed.

What effect has this had on you both?

We were devastated to start with. We often asked "Why?" Now we find ourselves replying "Why not?" Why should it have been anyone else and not us? Despite this philosophical view there are times when it makes us sad. However, it has strengthened us as a family and Emma and Jonathan have been remarkably mature about it.

Now that you are to lead Sunday Club, what is your vision for it?

It's early days. I want to work with the teachers and work it out together. I see the work among children as part of the whole church and I look forward to doing some all-age congregational activities. However, children do need a different approach from adults and we need to provide Christian teaching at their level. I hope we can also develop the times when the children are all together, with plenty of fun and appropriate music!

What are the challenges you face?

To make the Word of God interesting for children, so that they can come to know about God and to know Him for themselves. It is a whole church matter and we need the support and encouragement of the whole church family.

Parents and Tots

Every Monday during term time, St Thomas' Meeting Room is throbbing with life. Lots of children, from tiny babies to 4 or 5 year olds are there with their Mums, an occasional Dad and assorted grand-parents and friends. The adults find badly needed company and friendship and the children find plenty of toys.

Angela Antill and **Jean Watson** have run the group since it started in 1989. Initially they had small children themselves but they have happily continued to run Parents and Tots although their own children have to be at school. Their commitment to this group, their warm, open, friendly welcome and their genuine friendship offered to all who came have been appreciated by many. Angela and Jean are now standing down. As a Church we want to say a big thank you to them both. They will be sorely missed. We are grateful that Kim Winter will be taking over from them.

Christ in the Peak

ON MILLSTONE EDGE

Ray Hearn continues his series, based on his own paintings.

Jesus said: *"I am the Alpha and the Omega the first and the Last, the Beginning and the End."* Revelation 22:13

The picture of Millstone Edge was strongly influenced by a photograph in a calendar of Derbyshire photos. I also took my own photographs from the side opposite to the one in the calendar.

The sky is original, stemming from heart and mind. It is a picture of life, wild and vigorous, dark and foreboding but holding brilliant colours. The beauty, peace and order of the landscape with some wild untended areas is also a picture of life as a foretaste of heaven.

The man made rock edge dominates the picture. It represents **Christ, the Truth**, the cornerstone made by God who anchors us to God, giving shape and purpose to our lives, not only the beginning and the end but also the **Way and our Companion on the Way**.

The Cross on the corner is an Eternal reminder of the love and the judgement of God. It can be seen from all angles by all people.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ Jesus, he/she is a new creation. The old has gone. The new has come. All this is from God, Who reconciled Himself to us through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was in Christ reconciling the World unto Himself, not counting men's sins against them" -(Corinthians 5:18-19)

Jesus the Life, stands at the top of the path to welcome His saints, those who put their trust in Him and did not stumble. They are dressed in the white robes He has provided for them. White is a symbol of holiness - being set aside by God to fulfil His purpose.

The Ministry of reconciliation proclaims

- Jesus is Lord
- Jesus was crucified for our sins
- God raised Jesus from the dead
- Whoever believes these truths in their hearts and who calls on the Name of the Lord shall be saved

(Romans 10:8-13 and 1 Corinthians 1:23)

Two men are climbing the face of the rock, seeking to achieve God's purpose for them by their own efforts. This is Man's way, full of danger from falling rocks, and missed footholds. The two ways are summed up in the following scripture:

....Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness has not attained it... because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over a stumbling stone, *"See I lay in Zion a stone that causes you to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame."*
(Romans 9:31-33)

God gives us the choice (Genesis 2:16) to follow His way or our own way. His way leads to Life. It is the way of trust in God. Our way chooses eternal separation from the Life in God through Jesus. God has no place in our lives. It is a mystery. God gives us the choice to live according to His, "the Maker's instructions" or to ignore them.

Ray Hearn