

## Ploughshare December 2002/January 2003 (Scanned version of the original magazine)

### From the Churchwarden

This year we adopted "Commit yourselves to the Lord and serve him only" 1 *Samuel*, 7:3 as our motto.

A few weeks ago I was asked if I thought it would be a good idea to keep the same motto for another year. My reply was "yes". I hope you will agree with my answer. Why? My impression is that many members of our church family have really taken this year's motto to heart and that it has been demonstrated in worship, prayer and action.

During these first three months of the vacancy period Mark Hoare and I have received tremendous support from you all. We are particularly grateful to those of you who pray for us on a regular basis. "The prayer of a good person has a powerful effect". *James* 5: 16b. It is so reassuring to know that we are part of a team of people who, week by week, month by month, willingly and faithfully serve the Lord in both our churches. "All of you are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it". 1 *Corinthians* 12:27. We thank God for your spirit of genuine commitment to serving him and each other. We also thank all of you for so generously using your gifts, your time and your energies in maintaining and furthering the worship and work of our Christian fellowship. The length of the vacancy is as yet unknown. While we wait for our new minister let us continue to use this time in encouraging each other to be a witnessing worshipping community, strong in the Lord, faithfully serving him at all times.

During the next few weeks Christians the world over will celebrate the season of Advent. Advent is a time of preparation, a time of excitement and anticipation. The long period of waiting is almost over. God's promise of salvation is about to be fulfilled. Let us make ourselves ready to receive God's Son afresh in our lives by celebrating this season of Advent with joy and thanksgiving, remembering with gratitude all that has been good in God's provision for us in this parish and rejoicing in his wonderful message of salvation.

As we wait for the climax of this Advent season: the celebration of the birth of Christ, Immanuel, "God with us", let us rejoice in the knowledge that God can be trusted to fulfil the promises he makes to his people and be reassured that he is indeed with us. This year the message of Christmas will surely be especially meaningful to us as one of fulfilment of past promises, of hope for the future and of joyful anticipation of what the Lord will do for us, his people, in this parish. We cannot know how or when God's plan for us will come to fruition but we do know that if we trust him in all things, and live as his people, he will faithfully meet our needs.

I wish you all a Joyful Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Pam Brimelow

### The Vacancy-Update November 2002

In October the PCC met with the Bishop of Repton to discuss the Parish and Person Profile that we had drawn up. He suggested one or two changes and improvements but in general he was very complimentary of what we had produced. The changes have now been made and the profile is finished and ready to be sent to anyone who expresses an interest in being the new rector. Copies will be made available in St Thomas and St Peters for members of the congregations to read.

At the meeting with the Bishop it was decided to advertise nationally for a new rector. An advertisement is due to have been put in the church press on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> November with a closing date for applications being 13<sup>th</sup> December. A date for interviews has been set for 27<sup>th</sup> January 2003.

It is usual for someone to have to give three months notice, so if we were to appoint someone on this day we would be looking for the new rector to start in May. However don't hold me to that!

Details of the interview arrangements and procedure will be given nearer the time.

One complication is the current rectory. Apparently it does not meet the current standards for rectories.

There are two options, to buy another house in the parish and make it into a rectory or to buy a piece of land and build a new rectory. The current rectory would then be sold. The cost for this would be born by the diocese and not St Thomas. However, even if we have not sorted out the rectory (and I doubt that we will have) it will not stop us appointing a new rector. Provide the person is prepared to live in the present rectory for now the problem of a new rectory will be sorted out later.

As you can see we have a couple of very important months ahead of us. Please pray that we will select the person that God wants to appoint to our parish. I am sure that as well as personal prayer time we will be arranging some specific corporate prayer time.

**Mark Hoare**

## **Talking Donkeys and the Meaning of Life**

The fantastic animated film Shrek presented an innovative new perspective to the world of fairy tales and introduced the world to Donkey, a mule with the ability to talk. However, DreamWorks loses some of its credit for originality as I can reveal that talking donkeys are nothing new: Numbers 22:21-41 reveals a fascinating story of a man called Balaam being verbally reprimanded by his donkey except this is not recorded as a fairy tale but as an historic event God certainly moves in mysterious ways.

A talking donkey is an excellent example of the huge variety of stories, literature and historical events to be found in the Bible. It is so sad that such a wonderful book is very often classed as irrelevant and boring.

God, through the Bible, provides a guidebook for our lives, and his rich and varied character is clearly revealed through the depth and breadth of the material that we find within the 66 books.

We can read of the prophets living radical lives for God, speaking against social injustice, often against a backdrop of an oppressive regime. Song of Songs records a romantic encounter between a man and woman, graphically describing their love for one another. Psalms records beautiful poetry, both worshipping and pleading to God, while Proverbs provides us with timeless words of wisdom. History, literature, and many fantastic stories of bloodshed, hate, lust and the love of an ever-faithful God are recorded in the Old Testament.

The New Testament is also a source of diverse and remarkable writing. Who can read the words and teachings of Jesus without being both moved and challenged? Who can hear the truth of the gospel without offering a response? The energy and excitement of the rapidly growing early church is captured perfectly by Luke in Acts, while Paul's letters and teachings to the many New Testament churches also offer us support, as they are shown as struggling with issues that also sound familiar in a 21st century setting, such as hero worship, apathy, sexual promiscuity and love of money. Even complex issues such as the future are dealt with in Revelation, Isaiah and I Thessalonians. Indeed, the Bible does not shy away from difficult subjects; we can read about sex (1 Corinthians 6), suffering (Job), murder (Genesis 4) and gossip (James 3) and much more as God's people struggle - and often fail to follow His will.

And it is these accounts of real, believable people that really help me to make such an ancient book relevant to my ordinary daily life. Again and again we see God working through ordinary people, people who are not perfect but instead are well aware of their own inadequacies, people like Moses, David, Peter and Paul. Yet through God's great love for them we see these average people being redeemed and doing great things through the power of our great God.

There is no denying that the Bible can be a difficult book to understand, but for those who delve deeper, they will find the most varied and brilliantly constructed book that has ever been written. It is even better than the script for Shrek...

**Amanda Roper**

## **People and Jesus Sue Wheeler - Midwife**

**How** does my faith relate to my job?

As a Midwife I have the privilege of being present at the most exciting and amazing entrance of another of God's new creations into this world. Professionally I cannot openly share my faith but I often find myself saying a silent blessing on the child in my arms, aware of how absent God is in a lot of peoples lives.

How do I show the love of Jesus to the people I come into daily contact with?

I hope that I share the love of Jesus at work by having an unconditional acceptance and positive regard for all who I meet each day, be they colleagues or parents to be.

As a midwife I come into contact with people from all walks of life at a very exciting but equally vulnerable time of life. I believe that everyone has good in them and that they deserve respect, patience, kindness and acceptance just as Jesus gives us.

These principles help me to care for people, particularly in difficult circumstances such as situations involving domestic violence or child abuse.

Do I portray the Characteristics of Christ?

I think that that is for some one else to judge. What I constantly have to remind myself is not to strive for the characteristics of Christ but to strive for Christ Himself.

### **St. Thomas', Brampton – a early history**

Psalms 127: 1 "Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it.

It is the first Sunday of August 1831 and the Revd. M.Vincent, rector of the newly opened church of St. Thomas' Brampton, is conducting morning worship. The service is Matins, and every seat in the new pews is filled. Sunlight streams through the high arched windows on the south side of the nave and those seated there enjoy its warmth. Others gaze at the unusual decorated ceiling, or admire the new church furniture. The interior is spacious and plain.

Outside there is a general stillness, broken only by the occasional clapping of hooves on the dusty road or the sound of birdsong from nearby trees. This is the Sabbath day and the mills, potteries and coal workings around Brampton are silent. To the west of the church boundary, beyond a few cottages on the edge of Brampton moor, the fields sweep towards the distant ridge on which stands the ancient parish church of St. Peter and St. Paul at Old Brampton. The land is at rest in this calm interlude before the great Victorian era of expansion that will transform the lives of the population.

At St. Thomas' the congregation follows closely the simple and majestic words of the 1662 prayer book. The liturgical worship continues through confession, creed and prayers, ending with three collects and a formal dismissal. The pattern of worship has been set and will continue almost unchanged for the remainder of the 19th century.

The decades roll by, and early next century a chancel is added. The original closed pews are replaced with a more modern version and other interior changes take place. All this and the tumultuous events of the 20th century lie ahead. Now, as another century begins, how can this building best be adapted to meet the spiritual needs of those it was built to serve?

**Glyn Botham.**

## St Thomas' Parish Centre - keeping you in the picture

How many of you can remember what was in the August / September edition of Ploughshare? Some of you may be able to lay your hands on a copy (which would be very impressive!) and some of you may remember that there was an article in that issue all about the project and plans for a new Parish Centre, based at St Thomas'.

Well, a few months down the line, the Team would like to keep you in the picture and invite you to be more involved in shaping the future of our community.

**First to recap** - and a repeat of what we said last time (for those of you who can't find that issue too easily!). There are three main reasons that are now driving the project, which are, to improve:

- **accessibility for all** - (a requirement now under the Disability Discrimination Act) - the current premises fall short in particular for people with disabilities
- **accommodation for children** and youth activities to allow for growth and expansion of areas of work with these groups to include suitable space for activities e.g.. games, drama etc and adequate and sufficient storage space for their needs
- **upgrading the kitchen facilities** to meet requirements for the production and serving of hot and cold food. Each of these reasons will help us to reach out into our community by enabling the community to come in! We are therefore looking for a building design which a) meets our legal and social responsibilities for people with disabilities; b) provides flexible space for multiple use at any one time and c) adequate and sufficient storage for the different activities and groups both now and in the future.

**Next - a progress report** - we have some outline plans!! Thank you to everyone who has been involved in looking at the plans and discussing them at either of the two open evenings or with others at one of the Open House groups. Essentially what we are aiming to provide is:

- a new, more visible entrance from Chatsworth Road
- a single level building on the ground floor
- between 3 and 6 new rooms depending on what we want to use them for, including opening up two rooms in the tower
- a new office / reception desk and waiting area
- significantly more toilet facilities for all ages, and for people with disabilities
- extended car parking including designated spaces near the rear entrance for those who need them, and not forgetting space for bicycles
- storage space at ground level and in the roof space
- a modern kitchen with the capacity to cater for groups of all sizes.

**Next steps:** as we go to press the next tasks are to secure the various permissions that are needed to proceed. This involves detailed discussions with the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), and the local Planning Authority at Chesterfield Borough Council. We will also be approaching the Georgian Group and the Victorian Society as part of the consultation process to modify and agree a final set of plans in the light of advice and the requirements of the various bodies mentioned above to finalise the price for the new building (which we cannot do until we have the details of an agreed scheme); to plan how we will raise the funding which will allow us to contract with a builder some time in 2003.

Underpinning all of this, is a **call to prayer** - we want to proceed with this project in the secure knowledge and conviction that it is God's will, and that at every stage we are trusting Him and acting accordingly.

Graham Brown  
Team Leader  
Finance & Fabric Leadership Team

## Why me God? –Karen Riley leader of the Communication and Co-ordination Committee

I've lost count of the number of times I've asked this question since January. I'm a great one for volunteering for things and then feeling that I don't do things properly because I've taken on too much. But I remember telling myself, and those who asked me, that I was not willing to be considered as a Mission and Ministry Team Leader. I was already a deputy warden, was a member of the PCC, taught Discoverers at the 9 am service, had a full time job and a husband and two children who I felt like I hardly ever saw, oh yes and I am a licensed matron and producer of costumes for my daughter's dance school! I remember agreeing to be part of the group appointed to recommend six people to be the M&M team leaders because I was quite clear I was not going to be one of the six.

So why, one Saturday afternoon in the Rectory sitting room, when the group were struggling to find a name for the Coordination and Communication Team did I open my mouth and offer my services? Well, as much as I wanted to carry on saying "No", I believe God had been telling me for some time to say "Yes". I just didn't want to listen.

I'm so glad that I did listen and allowed God to lead me into serving him in this way. I lead a great team who between them enable God's love to be shared not just within our church family, but beyond the doors of St. Thomas' out into Brampton and Chesterfield through this magazine and Mustard Seed and much, much farther afield through our web site. Others on the team keep the services running by producing rotas and the newsheet, make sure church members are registered on the electoral roll, ensure that the legalities are completed in preparation for weddings, maintain the tape library and the bookstall.

And then there is the Church Office - which I think of as like a ship's engine (sorry Julie and Anne!), a well maintained and hard working machine that uses the power of God to keep St. Thomas' afloat and moving. Actually, I feel like a bit of a fraud because the team doesn't really need leading. They are all so good at what they do. I see my role as mainly pastoral, to support and encourage those in the team in their personal ministry, but also to have regard to the future to see how we, as a team, can develop our ministry and our mission to share God's love with people beyond our stone walls. But I'm still not sure I understand why me God.

**Karen Riley**

### **New Windows at St. Peter's**

Two "new" stained glass windows were recently installed in the sanctuary of St. Peter's, Holymoorside. These windows were possibly designed by the famous Irish O'Connor brothers in around 1865, and were rescued from the church of St. John the Evangelist, Eton by the London Stained Glass Repository. They were offered to St. Peter's last year.

Since then the windows have undergone cleaning and restoration by Stan Sydenham and Grenville Bramley, who live in the village. Stan and Grenville also installed the windows, before they were rededicated to the glory of God by the Archdeacon of Chesterfield, at ecumenical Harvest songs of praise on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2002.

The windows show St. Peter and St. John healing the lame man by the temple gate in Jerusalem, and Jesus calling St. Peter and St. Andrew by the Sea of Galilee. The photograph on the front cover is (from left to right) of our minister in residence, Revd. Alex Simpson, Stan Sydenham, Grenville Bramley and the Archdeacon of Chesterfield - Venerable David Garnett.

Anyone wishing to see these beautiful windows is welcome to call at St. Peter's Church on Cotton Mill Hill, Holymoorside - especially on a Tuesday afternoon when they may also be provided with a cup of tea.

Peter Grayson. Secretary.

## Outreach to the Elderly

As a church, we are committed to share the love of Jesus and we recognise six core values to inspire our mission and ministry. Two of those core values call on us to welcome and include all as of equal importance regardless of age, and to show God's concern for the lost, the suffering etc.

For the best part of ten years, a small team of members from St. Peters' and St. Thomas' have visited, on a regular monthly basis, the three residential homes for the elderly which lie in our parish. We hold a short service, encouraging the residents to join in if they can and if they wish, and then we spend a valuable time with them chatting or sometimes just listening. For a number of reasons, those currently able to carry out this service has reduced and we really need to strengthen the team.

The outreach is a gift of friendship and sharing which is its own reward. It is wonderful to see, for instance, a lady in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's disease lifting her head and singing along with us a well known hymn. Often hymns, readings or prayers trigger memories of the ways in which residents used to be involved in a variety of Christian communities. It is one of the saddest losses of the frail elderly that the opportunity to symbolise, articulate and celebrate their belief is only rarely given. We are able to provide the occasion. The smiles on their faces share their appreciation with us.

We have learnt that the frail figures grouped round the television can be much more alert than is supposed at first sight. Many will only have introspective thoughts and memories to occupy their mind, and a regular act of worship, linked with a friendly visit, provides a welcome break in the routine and a breath of fresh air from the outside.

Please, if you feel drawn to this work, would you give it a try? We meet at 1.10pm in St. Thomas' vestry and then visit the three homes on the third Wednesday of every month, returning home by 3.30pm. Just come along or, if you wish, contact David Oldale or the church office. For retired practising lay Christians being involved in this work could be not only for the benefit of the residents in the homes, but also for their own spiritual development.

## News from "Hope for Eastern Europe"

"Not by might nor power, but by my spirit," says the Lord God Almighty.

After returning from our August mission to Romania, I feel truly inspired and blessed, having experienced so many answers to prayer. Thanks to Robert, Les and a small team of others, the lorry was able to travel out (full to capacity) on the long journey to Romania. The purpose of this trip was to continue to reach the poor, sick and homeless with supplies, to assess ongoing needs and to share God's love.

It was wonderful to arrive and experience a very warm welcome from our friends in the Constanta region, and sample a delicious meal, lovingly prepared by Dina's sister Nuta. God is good - after many years we are now beginning to experience together the fruits of our prayers and labour. Many broken lives are being touched and restored by the hand of God. This gives us great encouragement and inspiration to continue in the vision which God has set before us, and extra strength and vitality to carry on.

The highlights of the August mission for me included:

- The progress of the safe house - a centre for Christian mission and support
- The Hope Farm vision for abandoned children in Isaccea is to become a reality
- The first dwelling to be built on a parcel of land in Cioculia is nearing completion
- The first well at Cioculia is almost finished
- Despite recently losing their father, the Chiriac family are renovating their new home in Basarabi
- A surprise visit to the "Rock of Ages" prison ministry to distribute Bibles and special parcels for young offenders

We visited a number of families with gift of love parcels and prayed for God's hand upon many needy situations. We also visited the leper community and Cataloi, where plans are being fulfilled to renovate a church and build a centre to support HIV/AIDS children and their families.

Progress on the mission centre in Bucharest is truly remarkable completion is set for spring 2003. This is a miracle from a tent! Plans to fulfil the Family Shelter vision will then begin. As the work extends we would value your prayers and support. If you feel challenged to respond, there are many areas of need from knitting to packing supplies.

Another outreach event is planned this Christmas time. It will be in Holymoorside Village Hall on Saturday 14th December from 10am 12noon. Cakes, Christmas decorations bric-a-brac and Romanian craft wear will be on sale. There will also be a bring and buy stall. Money raised will go towards the Hope Farm project. If you can help please contact Les or Pamela.

Remembering the words of our Lord Jesus "it is more blessed to give than to receive" May God guide and strengthen you all. God Bless you.

**Pamela Gratton**

## **Our SAMS Mission Partner in Peru is coming home!**

Alison Hawksley has almost completed her two-year contract with SAMS in Peru.

In November 2000, after some delays, Alison eventually arrived in the major Peruvian city of Arequipa, where she was to teach at the local fee-paying San Lucas school. She worked very hard, reorganising systems, classrooms and the curriculum.

Some poorer children could not afford the fees, and that is where churches such as ours were able to help, by members of the congregations supporting the children financially. Alison also studied Spanish, taught English and developed an English course. There is an orphanage in Arequipa, and Alison, having a heart for the poor loved to visit the children and wished she could have spent a greater part of her time with them.

Life in Peru has not been straightforward for Alison. She was in Arequipa when the earthquake struck. Many of us were very anxious to find out if she were safe, and were relieved when Mrs Hawksley informed us that she was. The house that Alison was in at the time shook so violently that all the books fell off the bookcase, but Alison was not harmed.

Many frightening after shocks followed the quake and this was a very difficult time) Happier times, however were the successes achieved by the school's choir, and the time that Alison was able to raise enough money for every child to go on a trip. This had been a problem for many children, even though the cost was only the equivalent of approximately fifty pence.

Alison is expected back in this country on December 2<sup>nd</sup> for three or four months. During this time, she will be visiting the churches which have supported her; she will be in our church at some point and you will be able to hear about her experiences in more detail. She has yet to decide whether or not to return to Peru for a further two-year contract. Alison asks for our prayers for good end-of-year results at San Lucas School, and for a Christian witness to touch the children's families and the whole community.

I believe we should also pray for a safe journey home for Alison, and for God to guide her future, whether it is to be in South America, in this country, or if, perhaps, God has something else in store for her.

Please pray for Alison, and thank God for her faith, trust, dedication and compassion.

**Yvetta Jacques**

## **SUSTAINABLE LIVING FOR CHRISTMAS**

Before we get totally immersed in the trappings perhaps we could think about how we "do" Christmas this year. We're using up more resources than the earth can regenerate. A fair deal for the poor and for future generations must mean self-restraint for the rich now.

This doesn't have to be a guilt trip, but we often pay these issues lip-service and don't actually do anything about it. We habitually do all the trimmings for Christmas Day and put it all - well, most of it - in the dustbin on Boxing Day. So, what could we do differently this year or next year without taking the Spirit out of Christmas?

- I have long been mocked for grabbing nice bits of wrapping paper to re-use next year. This isn't just meanness, but when it's going straight in the bin, WHY NOT? It could even become an endearing trait!
- Home-made presents are fun to make and show how much you care - it's the thought that counts, and you could even not be offended if they get recycled!
- Make your own, or re-cycle cards, using the pictures for next year with re-cycled paper.
- Don't send cards to everyone at church; sign the church card (hopefully it'll be there!) and donate what you've saved. Suggest this at your workplace or school too.
- Post early 2nd class - and donate what you save.
- Plant out your tree after Christmas if it has roots; or re-cycle it at a shredder at the tip or several garden centres.
- Think about presents: perhaps a "sustainable" present would make a refreshing change (try wrapping a compost bin in last year's paper!), or try to buy people environmentally friendly and fairly traded products. You could even give a present to be shared.
- Support organisations such as TEAR craft or Traidcraft or other charities in your purchases.
- Ask friends or relatives if they would prefer their gift money to be given to their favourite charity ...if they say "Yes", and then DO IT! They could do the same for you.
- Look out for locally produced food.
- Think of someone or some people you could invite to share Christmas with you.
- If you think of things you don't really need to buy this year (do we *need* all those snacks and chocolates we resolve to diet away in January), don't buy them and divert what you save to a worthwhile project - celebrating Jesus' coming into the world for all people. There probably weren't chocolates at Bethlehem.
- Think hard about what you can re-cycle or re-use from the Christmas celebrations.

This may all be a bit much to do all at once; you can save some changes for next Christmas. And have a happy and more sustainable Christmas!

**Rosie Welch**