

Ploughshare February/March 1996 (Scanned version from the original)

From the Rector

Eleven years ago as I write, we were holding our first Family Service at St Thomas'. It was packed standing room only - and has proved to have been a momentous occasion. It blazed a trail for two vital features of worship which we continue to try to follow. It was

- ◆ **for all ages**, together with at least some ingredients for **everyone** .
- ◆ **newcomer friendly**, assuming that many of those present. were totally unused to the way churches do things.

The features are every bit as important in 1996 as they were in 1985.

I remember speaking at that service about two characteristics of God. They are both to found in our motto for 1996.

'Come near to God and He will come near to you' -James 4:8

1. HE IS FRIENDLY. We can relate to Him and share and whole lives with Him. He is intimately involved in our joys and our aches and pains, our laughter and our tears. He really does "come near" to us.
2. HE IS JEALOUS. Jealousy is not a word which we happily identify with our God but *'The Lord your God is a jealous God'*, the Bible tells us. *'You should have no other Gods but Me'*.

Just as a husband is justifiably jealous if someone else steals his wife, so is our Lord when we spend our time, energy and affection on other gods. His claim is to be our number one. That is what. *'Come near to God'* means.

Roger Freestone Calls it a Day

In November, our co-ordinator, Roger Freestone had a major heart attack. Two months later, he has reluctantly decided not to return to his post.

Everyone will understand his decision to retire and we pray on for health and fulfillment for both Roger and Irene. He has every intention of remaining a committed and serving Church member and all at St Thomas' will be delighted about that.

We miss his smiling efficiency, his ability to laugh in almost any situation, his willingness to tackle whatever is asked of him (and more), his sensitive, pastoral manner, his prodigious hard work, his reassuring presence. The list could go on and on. In his nine and a bit months as our coordinator, Roger achieved so much and we are very grateful to him.

Christopher Frith

A Colourful Evening

On Monday 13th November 1995, a ladies evening entitled 'Colour, beauty and you' was held at St. John's Church, Walton. A large audience listened attentively to the speaker, Miss Anne Hibert, who was extremely enlightening.

For the first part of the evening, Anne explained the importance of the wonderful seasons which God has created; and the enormous variance of their colours. She highlighted and demonstrated how matching correctly your own colouring to a particular season of the year can enhance personal appearance.

For the second part of the evening Anne spoke very frankly about the importance of having God in her life and how this makes her feel bright, and fulfilled from within. She seemed to touch a great many hearts.

Introducing Andy and Tina Broom

We waited and waited but the journalist from **Ploughshare** never arrived, so we huddled around the kitchen table and interviewed ourselves!

"So tell us Andy a bit about yourselves and the family."

Tina and I met at Keele University where I was studying; geography and politics and she was getting a qualification in social work. I'd been brought up in Norwich; Tina in Somerset. We married in 1988, and have two children, Daniel who is 4 and Chloe, who's 2.

"And after Keele, what then?"

I continued to live nearby in Stoke while Tina finished her degree. I was unemployed for a while, then worked with Social Services and in a couple of youth Centres. I also had a year as a Lay Assistant in a Church there.

After that we moved down to Bristol, for 3 years at Trinity College. We both enjoyed our time there. I learned a lot at College not only about theology but also about myself.

"And did you work in Bristol, Tina?"

Yes, I did for a charity called Community Service Volunteers. The job involved placing young offenders on voluntary work schemes.

"And then to All Saints Wellington in Telford as their Curate, Andy."

All Saints has been a good place to be a Curate. It's a growing Church with a varied life and ministry. The parish itself is very mixed -based on the old market town of Wellington but with considerable new housing. I've had a good vicar who's given me the opportunity to have a variety of responsibilities and experiences. It's been a very happy three and a half years. We shall be sad to leave but are very excited at the prospect of moving to Chesterfield and to St. John's in particular.

"Tina, how do you both like to spend any spare time you have?"

The children seem to take up most of it! I do attend a dance class and enjoy having a go at patchwork, quilting, embroidery, that sort of thing. I'm no expert though. We enjoy getting out together to the cinema or theatre. Andy enjoys sport, especially watching his beloved Norwich City!

"And what about the children -do they have anything to add?"

Daniel: I was 3 but now I've finished being 3 and I am 4.

Chloe: Daniel go to school in Chesterfield.

"Thank you."

Andy is to be our new Curate responsible for St John's in May.

Touchstone

We hope this will soon be a familiar symbol in our community. But what does it stand for? Like all innovations it requires explanation and this is an educative process. Will you help by explaining to others? The service which Touchstone offers to the unemployed is unique, nowhere else in our vast bureaucratic system is there the personal support needed by the long-term unemployed to re-establish themselves as valued members of the community.

During 1995 there have been 28 long-term unemployed with us:

6 have moved into jobs, 6 have moved into further training, 8 are still with us and 8 have left on their own initiative 71% have therefore responded positively to the support Touchstone have provided.

This is an impressive record upon which we need to build, to achieve this we need your continued support. Individuals can become members by joining for a £5 fee, or offering a few hours each week to share your skills. We urgently need maintenance work, large or small in the home, garden or industrial site. All work will be supervised to a high standard and provides vital work experience as well as revenue for the enterprise.

Ken Singleton

Lent 1996

'Consider Jesus' is out theme

Our focus is to be on our Lord Jesus Christ, His life, His teaching, His relationships, His call. Anyone not in an established house group, who would like to join a Lent Group, should approach one of the Clergy.

Ash Wednesday, 21 February, starts it **off**. The message of John the Baptist, "*Prepare the way of the Lord*", will be the theme for a **day of repentance**. All members are encouraged to share in repentance and deep sorrow for our sins and those of the church and our nation.

Link Mission Partners

Andrew, Mandy and the children have now been back in Paraguay for four months which have been very busy for them. Many subtle changes have taken place. Old faces have gone, so new friendships are developing. Alex and Zoe are going through a shy spell at present but:

What can we say about Lizzy
My literary inspiration runs dry
Forgive my grammatical aberrations
As I give rhyming couplets a try.

She's a happy and smiling baby
Who's grown out of her colicky cries
Who attracts much attention here
Because of her big blue eyes.

Richard and Dorothy Banks

Edison Muhindo

Bursar of the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion Bursary Scheme

Country: Uganda

Age: 36

Family: Edison is married to Dorothy who is a nurse. They have two sons and a daughter between the ages of 3 and .

College: St John's, Nottingham

Present Post: Coordinator in the Diocesan Mission and Education Department

Future Prospects: Lecturer in New Testament at Bishop Tucker Theological College

Testimony:

Born into a Christian family, I grew up to be involved in ordinary church life. During this time, I did not quite understand what the Christian Life is really all about, despite being baptised and confirmed and regular churchgoing. In 1979 something tremendous happened in my life which began when I heard a preacher at our Easter Service. There was a need to answer God's searching voice, as he showed me my many sins, and I committed my life to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. I have been involved in Scripture Union and Christian Union in School and at University (where I studied Veterinary medicine) and at college where I studied for the Bachelor of Divinity exams. My earlier work was a Field Relief officer with Oxfam, as Archdeaconry Rural Development Worker and as a curate at Kasese Cathedral. I desire to study overseas because the type of specialised training that I need is not offered here.

Commended by

Bishop Zebedee Masereka as cheerful, dependable, adaptable, administratively capable and with leadership abilities.

Needs: Hospitality in a parish during the Easter vacation 1996.

Face to Face with Mavis Clough

Mavis is, for the second time, a Warden of St John's.

Mavis, have you belonged to St John's all your life?

Oh no. Although Harry and I moved to Walton in 1952, I only started attending St John's when our children went to the Sunday afternoon Sunday School up there in the 60's. There used to be a fortnightly 8am Communion service but I couldn't ever remember which Sunday it was!

How did you come to be so involved?

Well, a Sunday afternoon Family Service was started by the Curate at Holymoorside, The Revd Ernest Fisher, in the late 60's I suppose. It wasn't like Family Service today but children took the collection and did the readings. It was shortened sort of Evensong. We didn't have much music, but a number of us adults used to attend with our children.

Have things gone on steadily at St John's since then?

After Mr Fisher and the Rector both left, there was talk of closing St John's altogether -and that was a good way of getting things going. An informal committee was formed around Ken Waddington and I was part of that. After this, the regular 9am Communion service started and, later an official District Church Council was formed.

You were secretary of the DCC weren't you?

Yes, I took over in about 1983. I certainly found that getting; involved helped to nurture my faith.

Have you always believed?

I think my Christian faith stems from my time as a Guide with my sister, at St Leonard's, Spital. We were both confirmed together. I had a real faith in my teens. After I got married and had our three sons I wasn't involved much in Church and my faith had a bit of a lean time. If only we had the sort of church that we have today. Catering in a lively, interesting way for all ages, I'm sure it would really have helped me -and the boys.

What would you say helps your faith to develop now?

One important thing in the last 5 or 6 years has been the Monday afternoon Open House group. We meet fortnightly and always start with a special focus and listen to some recorded music to help us praise God. Sheila Turner usually leads this. We study a Bible passage and find we can share a lot. Four of us have been widowed over the last few years and we have really been helped and supported by the fellowship within the group. Recently we have had a prayer scrapbook and we can refer back easily to our various prayer requests. Every member usually contributes a prayer, even if it is only a few words.

What are your hopes for the future of St John's, Mavis?

We have built a porch onto the Church. We have built this Church centre. We now need to work for God's Kingdom to be built up. We must start reaching out more. Although I don't feel equipped myself, we need to cater for teenagers especially.

Gift Day at St Thomas' –17 March 1996

In recent years, Gift Days have been occasions of great joy and wonderfully sacrificial giving. The prayer of many is that this year's will be just the same.

The gifts will pay for the reordering and refurbishing of St Thomas, something the PCC have been planning for since before 1980. The aim of this is twofold:

- ◆ to help our worship to be more reverent, more meaningful, more involving and more honouring to God .
- ◆ to give flexibility to our use of the buildings, to help us to serve God and the community throughout the week, rather than just on Sundays.

Details will be available during February. They will show exactly what the scheme is and exactly how all members can make their contribution.

Gift Day is a wonderful opportunity to show God how thankful we are for all that has given us and how much we love Him.

Hope for Eastern Europe

A journey in faith to Romania December 1995

After a wonderful send off, waiting on God and trusting him for the right date and provisions, our royal blue Ford cargo finally set off on Sunday 10th December, 1995 to convey urgently needed medical supplies and equipment to Dr Nicolae at the Orthopaedic hospital on the out-skirts of Constanta

Due to hazardous fog we finally booked onto a French ferry at 8.40am from Ramsgate and travelled up the coast of France to Belgium onto our planned route. The weather was quite reasonable for the time of year, and we arrived at the German border on Monday at 3.55pm. Weather conditions were again very kind and the lorry travelled extremely well.

We arrived at the Austrian border 6.00am Tuesday, cleared Customs by 6.30am refuelled and had breakfast. By this time it was snowing heavily but we set off and kept good time through picturesque Austria, reaching the Hungarian border by 12.05pm.

We travelled well through Hungary and bought provisions, arriving at the Romanian border at 12.05 am Wednesday to be greeted by a long line of lorries too numerous to count patiently waiting to cross the border. We prayed that God would prepare the way and give us all the right attributes to endure the hours ahead (approx 20hrs wait), and our wonderful God met every need! We accepted everything without question (it was so amazing as I look back). He provided warm nourishing food -hot drinks -basic toilet facilities, warmth (sleeping bags, blankets etc.) spiritual food and joy to prepare us for our next challenge -passing through Romanian customs.

By this time I was prepared and ready (I think) to expect anything to happen. I even accepted the news quite calmly that our vehicle must be sealed and checked when we arrived in Constanta (this took 2 days, last journey). The final crunch came when we were told that we were in 'big trouble' as we needed two letters, not one from Dr Nicolae -one letter of invitation and one acceptance of our supplies. We must fax through and obtain the required documents. By this time I was near to tears as I knew this request was not just unreasonable but impossible as I had no means of contact. I looked at the official and told him this.

Eventually his superior appeared, "Well have you the document, I require?", "No" I said "we haven't the documents you require, we have decided to return to England". We returned to our vehicle -made a hot drink -huddled together to keep warm and waited. Soon the first official tapped on the passenger window. "Give me a passport", he said firmly and walked off. We felt that something was about to happen and our spirits lifted. On his return he instructed us to alight from the vehicle, Ian was told to break the customs seal and open the rear door. He began to check the load and inventory and soon came across some equipment he was puzzled about. Ian explained it was a blood suction machine used in surgery. "Enough", was the reply "Close the door." It obviously had an effect on him. He quickly issued me with a yellow document and firm instructions to go directly to the hospital and give it to Dr Nicolae. Thank you Lord! we were through. We couldn't go fast enough -Constanta here we come.

Crossing over to the Black Sea is quite a challenge due to the hazardous road conditions, but all this just melted away as we left everything in God's hands -we felt very positive and victorious -truly believing that "all things are possible with God" and we are more than conquerors through him who loves us.

Our Romanian brothers and sisters send their love and prayers and very grateful thanks for all the gifts.

We would greatly value your prayers and continued support.

Hope for Romania Team

SAYIT -SS Augustine Youth Interview Team

Two years ago, a group of Birdholme teenagers got together to form **Saints Augustine Youth Interview Team (SAYIT)**. At this stage in the project no one knew what we hoped to get out of this; it was just something for us to do. We met at Saints Augustine Church and for the first few weeks just talked about what we would do.

Together, and with the help of Jay MacLeod (the Church Curate), we decided that we would interview ex-miners, and use the interviews to help us understand what life was like then. As Birdholme is an old mining community, there was

no problem in finding people who were willing to be interviewed. Before we started to interview people, we did some research into the best ways of asking questions and making people feel that they could trust us.

At this time, also, we were thinking of what the end product could be. We had loads of ideas, from a drama to a radio show. Eventually we decided to write a book.

We set to work interviewing ex-miners and their families. Many of them had amazing stories to share with us. The next stage was absolutely boring -it was the transcribing of our interviews.

As we taped all of our interviews, we then had to write back every word, though we did get some help.

After this, we had to type up the interviews, so that we could edit them easily. That was the next stage, and it dragged on and on. I don't think one of us thought that we would actually finish the book, at this point, as it all seemed to be taking such a long time.

Now, finally we've finished and the book is at the printers. It is called: '**PITFUL OF MEMORIES': Chesterfield Teenagers Mine the Memories of a Dying Breed.** Our book is being published by Derbyshire County Council's Department of Libraries, Archives and Arts, and Saints Augustine Church. The book costs £5.00 and can be bought from our church or from the Library.

We had a big ceremony to officially launch **Pitful of Memories**. It took place in Ss Augustine Church, on Friday 8 December, 1995, at 3.30pm. Colliery banners flew; voices were raised in song and prayer; Tony Benn spoke; the book was unveiled; and refreshments were served. We do hope that you will all buy a copy of this book.

(First published in 'Together' magazine of Churches Together in the Chesterfield area.)