

Ploughshare June/July 1995 (Scanned version from the original)

From the Rector

Let me fill you in about our staff.

First, many congratulations to Sheila. The surprise announcement of her engagement to Don Stevenson, Chaplain at Bedford School, made a wonderful climax to the Easter Day Family Communion at St Thomas'. This means, sadly, that she will not only be marrying but moving also. Their wedding will be on 22 July, their farewell on 20 August at the 6.30pm service at St Thomas'.

I am delighted, to be able to announce that **we are to have a replacement curate, Peter Wilkinson.** He and his wife Julia introduce themselves here. Peter's ordination will be in Derby Cathedral on 2nd July and we hope a good number from the parish will want to attend. I am to have the responsibility and privilege of leading the retreat for those to be ordained and preaching at the ordination.

Brian Porter is on the long road of convalescence after major surgery just before Easter. Mercifully the growth removed from his chest was benign. Please join me in praying for a complete recovery.

Judith Henderson has also been suffering, her back causing all sorts of problems, but as I write she is getting back into action. We trust God for her healing also.

Roger Freestone seems to be in good health, coping admirably with the most unsatisfactory busyness which seems to afflict our church. So am I, I am pleased to say -and it's wonderful to be able to say that **Pam's** [Frith] health is very much improved. However I hope people understand that, at a hectic time, we might not manage to live up to everyone's expectations.

We owe so much to our retired clergy, Geoffrey Wilbourne and Sam Cartwright, and John Rollinson when he is able. Also to our **magnificent team of Readers** we would be pushed to manage without them.

With much love

Christopher Frith

Our New Curate, Peter Wilkinson

Peter Wilkinson writes ...

I am much looking forward to starting work at St Thomas' in the summer. The move to Chesterfield will almost be a return to my roots, having been brought up in Repton in the south of the county. After three years in Cambridge, where I am training for ordination, it will be nice to see some hills again!

To let you know a little about myself, I am married to Julia -in fact we married only last August. After University, where I pretended to study Maths and Philosophy but actually spent most of my time on the hockey pitch, I spent a year in Johannesburg teaching the Bible to students, followed by a year working in a petrol station.

Julia works for Christians in Sport co-ordinating all their student work, which she'll continue to do part time for at least another year. We both look forward to joining you in July.

VE Day Commemoration

A sermon preached at St Thomas' by **Robin Dawson** on 7th May 1995.

It was on VE Day that my wife's parents met -in RAF uniform. At that time I was, apparently, a pain to my mother; I didn't want a second man in her life, when my father returned.

Our VE Day is a time for thanksgiving. For What?

Victory, yes -but at what a cost. Lost years, lost friends, lost relations. The whole population was involved, working and suffering for each other. There was heroism. There was sheer hard work day after day after day. There was separation. Many people had to do things they would rather forget.

At VE Day there was a thankful and exhausted nation that through its trials had grown closer together. We too can now thank God for sacrifice, for suffering borne nobly and above all for the preservation of our nation -and the world - from a brutal, authoritarian, evil, fascist regime.

The prophet Isaiah looked forward to a time when the ruler will "*judge the needy with righteousness*", where "*they will neither harm nor destroy on all his holy mountain.*" On VE Day, that same feeling was abroad because the war had released a surge of creative thought about our society.

Now we have to take stock.

What have we done with the succeeding 50 years? That war-inspired creativity had already led to the '44 Education Act. It soon led to planning legislation, National Parks, the Health Service, medical advances, social security. slum clearance, full employment. Internationally, there was the United Nations, reconciliation with former enemies and the gradual formation of the European Community. We thank God for the "dividing walls of hostility" being destroyed.

We find ourselves, after 50 years at peace, better fed, better housed, better educated, more entertained, more healthy, infinitely more mobile and richer than we could have conceived 50 years ago. For this we must give thanks. But, are we satisfied? No. **Why?**

Our friends Andrew and Mandy Lines, returning from four years in Paraguay, make some shrewd observations about our country:

- a corrupt, sleazy, immoral selfish society
- people are either selling themselves, body and soul, to their occupations and activities or are underemployed or redundant
- tremendous emphasis on competition and choice
- a society skilled in passing the buck and pinning the blame on others"

We are a rich country. Why are we so short of money? Why the increasing gap between rich and poor? In a pluralistic society things that bind us together are breaking down. We've gone soft on making hard decisions and we have a lottery to provide money that we should be giving directly, either individually or as a nation. Abroad nationalism is rampant once more.

We need discipline to draw us together. Some say competition and market forces will provide a discipline. It certainly makes those of us in work, work harder. But does it draw us together? Some of those who had a vision on VE Day of a "*just and righteous society where they shall neither harm nor destroy*" are disappointed.

There is another discipline, a discipline that those who celebrated VE Day will know well. It is the discipline of service. My father served on HMS Sirius. What was the root of this service? A Common objective. Civilians, soldiers, seamen and airmen depended on each other. It was service borne out of a sense of obligation for the blood and sweat of others.

It is wholly appropriate that we should commemorate VE Day at a Communion Service, where we remember the sweat of Gethsemane and the blood of the cross, where we commemorate in the bread and the wine a victory, when defeat by the power of evil had seemed complete.

John describes Jesus Christ washing his disciples' feet, we need, with God's help, to reclaim this discipline of service.

As **individuals and families** we need politeness, consideration, respect for others.

As a **church** we need listeners, people who will comment creatively, give time to others (especially those not in our Church). We must ask ourselves whether our emphasis on our own spiritual welfare gives us enough time to serve. Praise God, there **is** so much service, often hidden, in our church.

As a **community** we must regain the discipline of service in our attitude to the old, those who are disadvantaged, those who don't fit.

As a **nation** we need the same discipline of service towards other nations which are poor or oppressed -and the individual people who form these nations.

This is all pretty idealistic. Going to war in 1939 was pretty idealistic.

As Christians we have an obligation to undertake this discipline and to lead in it. Jesus said to Simon Peter *"Unless I wash you, you will have no part in me."* We have seen in the past 50 years the battle between good and evil continue. It continues in each one of us. We know that we need to be washed clean of the evil which lies within us.

Through Jesus Christ's blood and sweat, we are made clean. Now we have an obligation to serve and an objective to glorify God. Let us pray for strength to do that.

Ray Hearn writes the following about the Cross on the Wall which he painted.

It can be found on the left (i.e. North) wall of the Church as you enter through the Main door. The four pictures are in the shape of a cross for practical and symbolic reasons. Several verses of Scripture provide the inspiration.

1. John 15:1-2 - *"I am the true vine and My Father is the Gardener. He cuts off every branch of vine that does not produce. And he trims and cleans every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit."*

The picture portrays that love can be painful to the one who is loved. In the same way the cross shape reminds us of the price God paid to show His love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

2. John 1:4 John says: *"In Him there was Life. That life was Light for the people of the world."*

Jesus is the Light who brings perfect order, light, purpose and fullness of life to the world which was described as follows in Genesis 1:2 *"The earth was empty and had no form. Darkness covered the ocean and the Spirit of God was moving over the water."*

In Genesis, the Spirit of God hovers over the waters. In the picture, God, the Holy Spirit, in the shape of a blue dove, is hovering over the cross and the Light of Christ crucified lights every corner of the Creation. John writes:

"The Light shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not overpowered the Light." John 1:5

3. A white dove is moving with great power in the picture on the other arm of the Cross. A dove has been the symbol of God's peace since the days of Noah:

"And that evening the dove returned to him with a fresh olive leaf in its mouth. Then Noah knew that the ground was almost dry." Genesis 8:11

White depicts the purity of God, blue, His love, red and gold the consuming flame of His holiness. Peace, Love, Purity and Holiness make up the Power of God, the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said to them: *"But the Holy Spirit will come to you. Then you will receive power; You will be My witnesses - in Jerusalem, in all of Judea in Samaria and in every part of the world."* Acts 1:8.

4. Over all is a shadowy picture of God. The crown He wears is a crown of thorns for, as yet, we still see but a poor reflection of Him as in a mirror (1 Corinthians 13:12). Nonetheless, He is saying: *"Behold, I am making everything new."* Revelation 21:5a.

The True Story of Sheila and Don.

I'm not really a 'dark horse' but I wanted to get used to the idea myself, as well as give you all a surprise on Easter Sunday when my engagement to Don Stevenson was announced.

Don and I met at Oak Hill College where we both trained for the ordained ministry. Previously Don had taught economics and indeed in 1988 when we left college he was unable to find a curacy and returned to teaching for a term. This meant that he was present at Derby Cathedral when I was ordained deacon in 1988 and that I was able to attend his ordination service in Malvern priory in December 1988, where he then served a curacy.

The years passed and we saw each other occasionally when I was visiting my parents in Worcester or Don stayed with his sister in Lichfield. In the summer of 1992 we both moved, myself to St. Thomas' and Don to be chaplain at Bedford School, where he also teaches R.E. and Economics. After renting for a time, Don moved into his own three bedroomed semi on the edge of an estate in Bedford and this is where I'll be living from late August. I'm glad not to be moving into a vicarage or school house to begin with, while we adjust to each other and to married life.

To return to the story, Don came to Tideswell last May and was at the ordination celebration in St. John's Church Centre afterwards. However, it was only later in the summer -September, to be precise when we began to correspond and our first weekend together was just before I went to Nepal for nearly four weeks. Due to our work, our time together since then has been limited, but we thank God for the way He has brought us together.

Now we are excited about the future and are very much looking forward to our wedding day, Saturday the 22nd of July. We hope that many people will join us for the service at 1pm in St. Thomas' and to praise God together -so please come. Once in Bedford I expect to be attached to a parish as a non stipendiary minister and do some further studying, as well as continuing as a tutor with St. John's Extension Studies and being involved a little with Don at Bedford School. Much has happened these past twelve months and we continue to look to God to lead us in the coming months and years ahead.

Link Missionaries, Andy and Mandy Lines

Saturday 22nd April was the day we spent at the S.A.M.S. conference at Swanwick, which is always enjoyable, informative and spiritually uplifting. It is a joy to meet again the missionaries and S.A.M.S. staff who have visited our churches in the past, Gary Beswick, Claire Toplis, Chris Rankin and of course this year Andrew Lines. Unfortunately Mandy and the children had been left behind, mainly because they were moving house the following weekend. Plans have now been made for Mandy to have the expected addition to their family in the U.K. and so they will be leaving for Paraguay on 31st August instead of May as originally planned.

Andrew is spending some of the extra time at Bible college to prepare him more fully for the work awaiting him on his return to South America. We were pleased to hear that Mandy is in good health. Alex settled in school and Zoe a very happy healthy little girl.

Richard and Banks

Who's Who in the Parish: Adrian Marsden-Jones

Adrian has just stepped down as Warden of St Peter's after four years. His leadership and service during that time have been appreciated tremendously.

Adrian, have you enjoyed your stint at Church Warden?

I have and I am grateful for all the very willing support at St Peter's. I was surprised to be asked to take it on just two years after arriving in the parish! I had been asked to be a Warden in my previous parish in Rochdale but had other commitments. I have found it to be a way of making a positive contribution in the Church and in the Community.

You seem to be a very community minded person. Is that true?

I suppose it is. We are lucky to be a close rural community in Holymoorside. Relationships between different community groups and the Churches are good and we need to build on that.

Congratulations, Adrian, on your recent election onto the parish Council. Why have you offered yourself for this?

I think I can play a part in helping to respond to the needs of the Community. My understanding of the Christian faith is that it is a faith of action and of service. So, you've got to be in there.

You are also involved in activities in the wider community of Chesterfield, aren't you?

I help with the Citizens Advice Bureau; this certainly keeps you in touch with the real problems of society. I'm also involved in Touchstone, our employment enterprise. This has great potential but it's difficult to harness the support needed in facing unemployment. At present, we are working closely with Chesterfield Borough Council trying to obtain funding from the European Social fund.

As Chairman of Churches Together in Holymoorside, are you encouraged at the moment?

We do plenty as URC, Methodists and Anglicans together which wouldn't be nearly as effective if we acted on our own. The joint Nativity Scene and Easter Garden make a real impact. These serving as an important, religious reminder to those bent on the hectic pace of business, touring or even Sunday shopping. Likewise "Community and Coffee" and "Little Lambs" which we hold monthly. With our Gala Service in the marquee, Christingle and Maundy Thursday service in the village hall, we are really stepping out of our Church into the community.

Do you see the Churches in Holymoorside uniting one day?

It's a delicate matter. We'll only move forward when there's a real consensus and members don't feel threatened, Many are devoted to their own Church! But, we pray for God's guidance....

Touchstone News

Ken Singleton writes the following resume of an interview at the A.P.C.M.

May I introduce the new Enterprise Meager to Touchstone. Could you tell us a little about yourself and about Touchstone?

My name is Ken Singleton and I started as Enterprise Manager on 20th March 1995. Touchstone is incorporated as a non profit making company limited by guarantee. It has a small board of unpaid directors which meets every two weeks.

Could you update us on Touchstone and tell us about the aims of the organisation?

The main objective is to alleviate the distress and hardship of unemployment, encouraging access to other local vocational development facilities. We are offering a programme of worthwhile vocational activities, such as leisure and technical craft, use of computers, administrative work and gardening work experience in the community.

Could you tell us a little about the gardening service?

The community gardening service has two sites: the West Ward leisure gardens in Brampton and three allotments and associated training facilities at Stand Road Newbold. In the first phase these will be used for horticultural training for unemployed volunteers and for growing vegetables to be sold at fund raising events. In the longer term it is planned to develop a financially self sufficient gardening service and increase the work force as growth allows.

How many unemployed have Touchstone on the scheme at present and where is your main base?

There are now 6 unemployed people on the gardening section with two unemployed workers in the office. The temporary offices are in portacabin No. 2 behind St Thomas Church.

Could you explain about the funding?

The funding is wholly charitable. Any additional help that can be given by Church members would be of considerable importance to the success of the programme. The monies raised from donations and fund raising events is our only source of revenue at the present. Touchstone have a number of fund raising events coming along shortly

What are the immediate programme requirements?

- To prepare a detailed business plan for the gardening service.
- To seek appropriately located premises at low cost.
- To continue local fund raising to achieve a target of £10, 000 and then an additional £15,000.
- To pursue European funding for the future.
- To increase numbers on the programme.

United we Stand

When Friday 5th - Saturday 6th May 8.30pm - 8.30am

Where Derby Cathedral

Who Nearly 120 young people from all around the diocese organised by Chris Dyer

What A whole series of workshops and activities throughout the night, interspersed with vibrant and sometimes reflective (including Taize) time of worship.

There was everything from helping the homeless on the streets of Derby by dishing out soup, to making a short programme about the event for Radio Derby, which was broadcast early on Sunday morning. This was what Alistair Gordon, Jonathan Cooper and myself opted for, and we thoroughly enjoyed it. The general feedback, as we interviewed people for our workshop during the night was very good. We had the privilege of using Radio Derby's editing facilities (primitive though they may be - cut and stick the tapes together!) which was greatly appreciated.

Everyone went for a walk at 4.00am with breakfast at 5.00am. At 7.30am we had the final worship session, where people from each workshop gave their version of what had happened.

May we express our thanks to Sheila, both for running a workshop and for ferrying us there and back.

Jonathan Calow

Book Review The Windy Day

By Teddy Horsley and the Holy Spirit, Bible Society 99p

This simple story focuses on a puzzled bear called Teddy Horsley, who gradually comes to understand about the Holy Spirit by comparing the effects of a particularly windy day to the effects of the Holy Spirit at his church, who are celebrating Pentecost.

Neither can be seen, but, unlike the wind, the Holy Spirit makes the people happy, and Teddy Horsley feel loved and secure.

The ideal book to have available (especially at this time of the year) when young children ask about the Holy Spirit, with questions and "talk abouts" in the back of the book.

One of a series of Teddy Horsley books.

Book Review The Hard Sayings of Jesus

By F. F. Bruce Hodder and Stoughton £8.99

"Some of the sayings in the Gospels are difficult to understand and need explaining. Others are easy to understand, but hard to put into practice. In this unique book, F F Bruce looks at both kinds with honesty and insight." So states the paragraph on the back cover of this immensely useful and interesting book.

The sheer convenience of being able to turn straight to the appropriate page for a clear and easy to understand explanation of a "hard saying", saves so much time. I think most Christians would really appreciate this book and I highly recommend it.

Pauline Latimer

6.06. Sunrise Service

Fifty of us, from nearly two to over seventy years, gathered at Grove Farm, Lodes Road, Holymoorside at 6 a.m. on Easter Sunday to watch a pink glow in the clouds over Chesterfield. We sang just the first verse of '*Led like a lamb to the slaughter*'- and thought of Jesus dead and buried in a tomb.

Then three women came and gave us the news that '*Jesus is risen*' and we all rushed to a tomb (entering an empty barn which was dark except for one candle and some folded grave clothes.) We all experienced something of the excitement of those first disciples and out on the field again we sang '*You're alive, You're alive, You are risen, Hallelujah!*' while the sun broke through the clouds.

We lit an Easter bonfire and boldly gave the Easter Greeting 'The Lord is Risen, He is Risen indeed.' Our service continued with more singing and rejoicing with streamers, with the renewal of our baptism vows and prayer for Chesterfield. Then while Easter eggs were found breakfast was prepared and we enjoyed sharing food together -a memorable start to Easter Day.