

# Ploughshare June/July 2002

(Scanned version of the original magazine)

## From the Rector

### **GOOD -BUT COULD BE BETTER**

*A summary of the Rector's report to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting*

This is a special place, with special people and a special work of God going on here. The last year has been remarkably uncontroversial, a year of steady progress.

### **Some NOTABLE FEATURES include...**

**The formation of the six Mission and Ministry Teams** encompassing **all** we do. The commissioning of the six leaders by the Archdeacon in January was a momentous occasion. We now have a shared leadership and a workable structure.

**Feeling more part of Derby Diocese.** We have participated in Diocesan programmes (*Talking Money, Being a Blessing*, avoiding business meetings in Lent, etc.) and been blessed by them. We await the Party in the Park eagerly.

**Children's and Youth initiatives** led by Neil Roper, supported by Karen Herrick. Opportunities in the local schools, Cosmic club, the Holiday Club (Cosmic Circus) and so on spring directly from our employing a gifted Youth and Children's worker -just an idea at the Annual Meeting two years ago.

**Bridges with the Community** have gradually been appearing and our building project aims to develop them.

**A group of those in their 20's and 30's** has emerged, plugging a gap which we have had for a while. Those who grow up through our youth and children's groups tend to go off to university and rarely return - although our current crop of students are a huge encouragement and very supportive.

**Our wonderfully active, retired clergy.** Sam and Elsie Cartwright have been joined by Alex and Pat Simpson, who look after St. Peter's, and Robin and Eileen Balch during the last year - each one a treasure, contributing much.

**Facing a Vacancy.** We have been without a Curate for seven months and we are surviving. Soon the parish will be without a Rector for a while. Our churches are in good heart with excellent people taking responsibility. Please pray for them.

### **THE REAL CHALLENGES** seem to be:

- **Reclaiming a generation.** A generation has grown up knowing next to nothing about Jesus - and now we seek to reach their children. This is crucial and leads to...
- **Developing our buildings.** Portacabins are inadequate. Replacing them with a permanent structure and seeking to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act is now urgent. Our project will require vast amounts of faith, courage and generosity.
- **Committing ourselves to the Lord and serving him only** our apt motto for 2002.

### **Christopher Frith**

Christopher and Pam's last Sunday at St. Thomas' is due to be 1st September and the Induction and Institution at Alvaston is to take place on Wednesday 11th September. Please make a note now in your Diaries.

## Spring Harvest 2002

This year my daughter, Laura, and I made our third visit to Spring Harvest, at Butlins in Skegness. As usual our expectations were high, and we were not disappointed.

This year's theme was 'You've Got Mail', focusing on Jesus' letters to the seven churches of Asia, in the book of Revelation. The main Bible teaching sessions, held daily, were led by David Coffey, who offered excellent exposition and a challenging message to the church.

It was enjoyable to meet other Christians in discussion in the 'Zones' each day, and it was encouraging to hear about the work of other churches around the country. One evening I broke with my own tradition and went to the Celtic worship offered by the Northumbria Community. I found it relaxed and informal, but also with a deep and sincere message.

My favourite moments have to be the excitement of the Big Top' evenings, with great speakers and powerful worship, and also one afternoon, spent with Laura on the beach, paddling in the sea (the water was so cold, my feet hurt!). One message I felt I came away with, was to spend less time working, and more time having fun!

Laura's age meant that she now moved up into the young teen's group, which was called 'Toast'. Here's what she said about it:

In Toast we did Toast Idol (like Pop Idol), Friends like these (a fun game) and The Post Shop (a soap made up by the leaders). I enjoyed going to the fair and swimming at the Splash Pool, which has lots of fun slides and rapids. My favourite moment was going to see The Tribe in concert with my mates - it was excellent! I've already persuaded Mum to let us go again next year - not that she needed much persuading!

**Pat and Laura Clayton - May 2002**

## Bishop in Mission - visiting the Chesterfield Deanery on 13th and 14th June

This year is the 75th anniversary of the creation of the Diocese of Derby. A whole range of different activities have been planned to mark the occasion, including the Party in the Park on 22nd June. Earlier, the people of Chesterfield will also have an opportunity to meet Bishop Jonathan as he visits the Deanery as part of his Bishop in Mission tour.

The programme has been put together with a number of representatives from the deanery including two people well known to us - David Oldale and Neil Roper. The result is an imaginative and challenging two days! Here is a taster of what the Bishop is expecting: Thursday 13th morning prayer at St Mary's meeting with clergy meeting market traders visit to Dronfield School for lunch and forum with students afternoon meeting with the Mayor and officers of Chesterfield Borough Council 10.30pm - midnight - visit to Zanzibar Nightclub to meet staff and clientele Friday 14th morning free (to recover from the night before!) lunch with Chesterfield Rotary and address Rotarians afternoon meeting with North East Derbyshire District

Council tea at St John's, Walton with ecumenical leaders Nyam-yeo choir at the Winding Wheel with Bishop Jonathan as speaker'

So, look out for him on his two days in our area, and let's hope the Bishop's visit sparks some interest in the good news of Jesus amongst non-church goers in all walks of life. Please pray for the Bishop, the arrangements and all those who will come into contact with him.

**Julie Lomas**

## THOUGHTS ON PRAYER!

One of the blessings of being "retired" is the freedom to enjoy aspects of life that previously were rather rushed! One recent example of this was visiting York Minster on a weekend away. I noticed in the Minster this offer of ministry, "if there is something or someone you would like us to pray for, write your request on the tear-off and place it in the box", This emphasised a growing awareness in me, of the need to pray (or intercede) for those I love, those in special need, or those God has placed on my heart. Bishop Michael Ramsey once said this, "to intercede means not pleading with God but standing in God's presence on behalf of another".

So it has come to me anew, the real value and importance of this act of praying. I suppose for many years I often felt inadequate for such a task, or I would be slipshod in actually doing it. Sometimes I felt my prayers were of little consequence ..... But now I find a notebook really helpful and lists are of practical use too! Also I have discovered `Julian of Norwich', a mystic of the 14th century, whose writings are still valued today. She crystallised it for me with these words written hundreds of years ago.

"It can be a help to grasp this. For it follows that to pray for others we do not have to be clever or eloquent or even perceptive of their needs. Just ourselves, as we are, simple, a bit confused perhaps, but wanting God's will -or wanting to want God's will for ourselves and others.

It is God's business to take things on from there. We are to fill the water pots with water -and we are to fill them to the brim-the wine-making is his. We are to remove the stone; 'Lazarus come forth' belongs to him. We are the dry bones; the clothing with flesh and the breathing upon them is his".

These words really encouraged me. I hope they do the same for you!

**Eileen Balch**

### Who?, Me !!

We've all said it, haven't we?

How many times down my years that I must have said this I can't now remember.

After 23 years in my first job I classed myself as the proverbial "Jack of all trades and master of none". Yet this was just the requirement of my next employer. This ultimately led me into consultancy with a wonderful opportunity to travel and meet many different peoples around the world. Then to be redundant, yet as a good Methodist, with my family, we bought a pub!! That brought my wife Laura and myself to Derbyshire and into contact with the Anglican Church, at Foolow. We left the pub (Restaurant really) after 6 years, no richer financially, but what an experience. This is when, 8 years ago, we were recommended to Chesterfield and to St Thomas'. Things were not all plain sailing even then, after another period of consultancy I found I was "too old", no one wanted me as an employee any more and faced 9 months unemployed, not "Who? Me!!" but "Why Me?".

Looking back realistically, in all of the "Who ? . . . Me's! !" I can now see many reasons, all of which have helped me to serve and witness to my Lord and my God. It brought me through 4 years as warden at St Thomas', and was party to some of the early discussions on the need to change the structures within St Thomas'. But "Caring and Sharing", that's not business, that's not management, is it?

When the Lord calls, all too often we can't understand His reasoning, you know, Samuel didn't say "Who? ...Me!!", he said "Here am I use me"

So I hope that you will join me in my prayer, **Just as you call, fill me with wisdom, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, enable me to do your will.**

Amen.

**David Holden - Caring and Sharing Ministry team leader.**

# CRUCIFIXATION

An artistic response to aspects of the Crucifix and the  
Crucifixion through the art of James Martin  
Exhibition at Thomas' Church during Holy Week 2002

We were told it was "controversial". Don't come "if you are easily offended" and don't bring children "because of the subject matter". If James Martin's work was in film format I would have given it a "U" certificate. My children would have been untouched. And here lies the rub. James Martin's major theme is that we have become so used to seeing the crucifix, that the pain, the blood, the torn flesh, the death, the degradation, the loss of hope, the emergence of hope and love has been lost to us. How do you depict this in static art?

The print entitled "Lord what must you think of me to wear your death as jewelry" displays a cross and chain. To wear a cross? To pierce your ears with crosses? To wear trendy gothic crosses? To wear God's Son's death as a statement of faith or a statement of fashion? ,James Martin writes in the brochure "what must He think?"

"Jesus in the Sand" is a photograph of Christ on the cross sculpted in sand on Swanage beach. Artistically it was beautiful. Jesus had serenity. The public responded to the art positively. When the Artist asked the public what their reaction would be if he had sculpted a knife attack they said it would be unsuitable for a public beach. It appears that crucifixion has become suitable.

The pieces "Why?" (a collage on wood), "Barbie on the cross" (Barbie doll and wood) and "Aunty Christ" (ink on cotton) all explore replacing Christ on the crossed beams because "the little man on the cross" has become anonymous. The collage "Why?" was created after James Martin had asked many people who they believed did not deserve to be crucified. People gave reasons why Ghandi, Mother Theresa and Princess Diana should be crucified. However people felt that Nelson Mandela, closely followed by Cliff Richard, did not deserve crucifixion. Hence Nelson Mandela's face appears on the crucified body. So why did Jesus deserve to be crucified?

I have only given a thumb nail review of part of the "Crucifixation" exhibition. If you have a chance to see James Martin's work, don't pass it by. Controversial? Maybe. A thought and faith provoking preparation for Easter? Definitely. Thank you to the Rector and the Church Wardens for being brave enough to hold this stimulating exhibition.

**Tim Wheeler**

## Hope for Eastern Europe

Together we are making a difference. We really appreciate you, our dedicated partners in mission. Your faithful prayers and gifts play a vital role in enabling the "Hope for Eastern Europe" mission journeys to reach the poor sick and homeless people of this region. As a result of your support many people are experiencing God's love and receiving Jesus into their lives.

### Good News

The "Hope for Life" mission centre - a vision to help support people in times of crisis - now being renovated and extended. Six basic apartments for gypsy families in Nazareca purchased and being renovated The Chiriac family recently rehoused in Basarabi. Ten gypsy homes in Tinca Ovadea completed. Parcels for sixty young offenders in prison. Parcels and medical supplies for residents and helpers in the Tichilesti leper community. Emergency food parcels for poor families in crisis. Children's Christmas "gift of love" boxes. Bibles, hymn books and Christian literature distributed. "Hope Farm" - a project to accommodate, train and equip young people in life and job skills. The purchase of a 12 seater minibus to support mission outreach.

### Future Vision

A group of twelve young musicians from the poor region of Basarabi Constanta, where we are based, have an opportunity to visit us in Chesterfield. Would you like to help this vision become a reality? We need help to support them on the journey, accommodate them and look after them. We are planning another "Spring into Action" outreach at Holymoorside village hall in June. The proposed visit could be planned for the first two weeks in August2002. If you would like to support our work by sponsoring a child, supporting a poor family, packing supplies or in any other way, please contact Pamela and Les Gratton.

**Pamela Gratton**

## **Christian Solidarity Worldwide**

"Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you also are in the body." This verse from Hebrews Ch 13 describes the work of Christian Solidarity Worldwide whose national director, Rev Stuart Windsor, visited St Thomas on 12th May and spoke at all three services.

The bare facts, he told us, are these: 250 million Christians around the world live under conflict, war, discrimination, persecution, and martyrdom. 165,000 of them are martyred each year, 1 every 3 minutes. Stuart told us the story of Soon Ok Lee, a woman of Communist North Korea, dedicated Party worker and high-ranking official who fell from favour during a purge and was sent to Khechen Women's Prison. The prisoners had to work a 19 hour day making goods for export. Anyone who fell asleep was put in confinement in a cage 2ft wide by 3.6ft high. They would come out paralysed. But the worst treated of all were the Christians, forced to walk bent down (to prevent any glance heavenward). These worked in the foundry, and Soon Ok Lee's conversion to Christianity came through seeing the willingness of these women to accept responsibility for anything that went wrong in the foundry. They would be kicked brutally and then executed by having molten lead poured over their heads.

We heard of the situation in Sudan, a land torn by civil war in which the Southern Christians have seen their villages burned down, their men folk killed, and their children taken into slavery to the Moslem North. When the aid agencies have been forced to leave, CSW has gone in secretly and redeemed as many children as it could afford, restoring them to their mothers.

Similar work goes on in The Spice Islands, Burma, India, Pakistan and elsewhere. In all cases detailed accounts of atrocities are recorded and Governments around the world are informed. On a lighter note Stuart spoke of the CSW sponsored school in Hetauda, Nepal, which provides a much sought-after Christian education in a Hindu country increasingly under threat from Maoist subversion.

Finally we were invited to get involved through prayer, petition signing, and writing letters. By doing this we could save the lives of Ayub Masih in Pakistan and Pastor Gong in China and exert pressure on all repressive regimes. Full details and sample letters appear in CSW's publications "Response" and "Action Info." published every 2 months. If anyone would like further information please ring me on 569359.

**Robert Batten**

## **CYFA Weekend away**

In March over 70 of us descended on Quinta in Shropshire for a weekend of worship, teaching, fun and friendship. This is a regular weekend event, which happens every 6 months and involves a number of different churches.

The team leading the spiritual input were from St Thomas' Crookes in Sheffield. The message was from Daniel and it focussed on living life in a difficult environment. The team that came were enormous (about 17) and they covered all the teaching, worship leading and small groups (They even had a couple of DJ's with them).

Hannah Willis from Cyfa said, "I found the weekend inspirational, I'm glad I went, can't wait to go again in the future."

The weekend also involved a trip to Shrewsbury and a hike or video on the Saturday night.

The next weekend is already being organised, and looks like being as great as the previous ones have been.

**Neil Roper**

## Children's Books - a Review

I have reviewed two books that I have shared and enjoyed with my own children. One is for the younger age group (perhaps 4-8 years) and the second is for slightly older children (perhaps 8 -12 years).

Many of the children's books are hard-back, and buying new books can prove relatively expensive, especially as children may grow out of them so quickly. I have chosen to review two simple books that are soft back, and each costs less than five pounds.

**"Hello God It's Me"** - This is a short collection of lively prayers published by Scripture Union, that is written by a Stephanie King (a teacher) and illustrated by Helen Mahood. It can be read with younger children to help them learn how to talk to God about everyday things such as learning, eating, wobbly teeth, playing and special times. It is a compact, bright book that is divided into several dozen short prayers, which should retain a small child's attention. Colourful pictures and suitable Bible verses complement the prayers. I would recommend this book to encourage parents to put aside a special prayer time each day to share with their children, and to help them to develop a loving relationship with God.

**Stories of Jesus** - This book was first written (by Tim DudleySmith) in 1971 and Lion Children's Books published this edition in 2000. It consists of 44 short episodes that are 2 or 3 pages in length. The episodes are linked together chronologically so that the ministry and life of Jesus unfolds in a natural, sequential and memorable manner. Many of the stories will be familiar and are soundly based on the Bible, with appropriate references provided. The author has blended imaginative details with the gospel records to lend a colour and immediacy to the narration that makes for authentic and also compelling reading. It brings the times and characters, and the central figure of Jesus to life in a colourful and refreshing way.

Both of these books will be made available for purchase from the bookstall for this summer.

**Mark Torkington**

## Julie Lomas reports on the work of The Bible Society.

On February 11th the Bible Society gave a presentation in Sheffield on their work.

Founded in 1804 the Bible Society has always sought to "make the Bible heard". Following on the path started centuries before, which Glyn Botham has written about; the Society has been passionate about the Bible and encourages others to share their passion for God's word. There are three main areas in which their work is concentrated:

**BIBLE:** the goal is to make the stories known both in the culture and the church through fresh creative encounters with the Biblical narrative; to help change opinion about the Bible so that it is valued and viewed positively.

**CHURCH:** the goal is to help the Church earth itself in the Biblical story, shaping its mission in local communities across the land.

**CULTURE:** the goal is to convince our culture that the Bible offers a valid and valuable resource for the way in which we might shape our future that it might be a resource for our social imagination..

**Neil Crosbie, Bible Society's Chief Executive said:**

"Our vision is for a world

- where the narratives of the Bible are known and loved in a vibrant Christian Church
- where people who are searching for direction and fulfilment find a connection between their yearnings and the timeless truths of the Bible

- where the Biblical vision of forgiveness, justice, freedom and hope are lived out in nations, among communities and in the hearts of individual people
- where everyone had the opportunity to encounter the drama of the Bible for themselves, bringing purpose, vitality and dignity to their lives".

To achieve this, the Bible Society brings the Bible into people's lives by:

- Faith comes by hearing - Bible Society's Scripture cassette programme, making the Bible heard in the Church and across the world
- Bible a month Club - a club for supporters committed to providing resources to make the Bible heard around the world.
- Research - Bible Society supports a number of research projects to enable the Church to influence culture
- Resources - Bible Society works with a variety of partners in the arts and media to develop biblically inspired materials for the Church and wider culture - an example of this was the animated film "The Miracle maker".

**Will you help?** There are a variety of ways that you can be part of this work - you can give your money, your time, your prayers and you can tell others about the work. You can also read your own Bible and hear the message from God for yourself, for the Church and for our culture in 2002.

The Bible Society - making the Bible heard  
[WWW.BIBLESOCIETY.ORG.UK](http://WWW.BIBLESOCIETY.ORG.UK)