

## Ploughshare October/November 2002 (Scanned version of the original)

### From the Churchwarden

Another era in the history of St Thomas' and St Peter's has come to an end. Christopher, our Rector for the past seventeen years, has left us and is now the Vicar of Alvaston in Derby. He and Pam and all the family will be greatly missed. The tributes and emotion during their farewell weekend bear testament to this. We thank God for Christopher's time with us and uphold him in our prayers as he begins his new ministry.

So what now for St Thomas' and St Peter's? Not until Christopher said at his farewell service "from tonight I am no longer Rector of the parish and from tonight I relinquish responsibility for St Thomas" did it really hit me that Christopher was going, and what the implications are. My first thought was "well, who is responsible?"

Of course, as churchwardens, Pam Brimelow and I are legally responsible, and we would value your prayers as we carry out our duties. However I believe that all of us at St Thomas' and St Peter's are responsible for our parish. Over the past few days I have had a picture in my mind of two ships. One is a large container ship and the other a Roman galley.

First the container ship. It is in mid ocean but its engines have broken down. The ship is drifting and not going anywhere in particular. At the moment the sea is calm and there are no rocks. The crew is quite happy to await the rescue that they know will come. Eventually the engines will be restarted and the ship will be under way. Meanwhile the crew is getting lazy and the cargo is rotting. If a storm comes or they drift near to rocks the ship could founder.

Second the Roman galley. The galley has been blown across the sea in a strengthening wind. A large sail has been hoisted and good progress has been made. Now though the wind has dropped and the galley is in danger of being becalmed. Immediately the galley begins to slow down, the crew get out their oars and start rowing. They have not rowed for a while so it takes a little while to sort themselves out. A few oars break but are quickly repaired, some people become tired but are relieved and allowed to rest. The boat still generally goes in the right direction and little momentum is lost. In fact after a short while progress is as good as when they had been reliant on the wind. Storms and rocks are easily negotiated.

By the time the wind returns the galley is still on course and schedule and the exercise and discipline from rowing has produced a fitter and more cohesive crew. Indeed the crew wants to continue rowing as well as being driven by the wind.

I trust and pray that St Thomas' and St Peter's will be like the Roman galley. When our new Rector comes he or she will find that we have continued to move forward following our mission statement '*Sharing the Love of Jesus*'. We will be reaching out more into the local community both in practical and spiritual ways. Our development programme will be on track and our work with children will be flourishing. Everyone will have been pulling together and playing their part, putting that extra effort and commitment in and perhaps using talents they did not know they had or were afraid to show.

Of course we have great advantage over those on the galley. We have Jesus. The first and foremost thing we must do is pray, seeking His help, guidance, encouragement and will. This is a great opportunity to make us a praying church. We must not get so busy that we do not pray. If we cannot do anything else we can all pray whether it be individually, in groups, at meetings or during services.

So, let us hoist the banner of Christ to our masthead and go forward in the name of Jesus.

Mark Hoare Churchwarden

## **About the Vacancy**

We now have a gap between Rectors, a time referred to as a vacancy or interregnum. It is the Church of England's policy to have a gap between one incumbent leaving and a new one starting. This is to allow a parish to get the previous incumbent out of their system before a new one starts. The length of the vacancy can vary depending on how quickly a new incumbent is appointed. This depends on how long it takes for the diocese to find someone able, acceptable to the parish and how long it takes the appointee to come. It is unusual for a vacancy to be less than six months and can be up to a year or more.

### **So where are we up to in the process?**

Soon after Christopher announced he was leaving, the PCC met a couple of times to start to draw up a profile of our parish and person we would like to have as rector. This has now been together in draft form and distributed to the current PCC for comment. Copies have also been sent to the Bishop.

At the start of October the PCC are meeting with the Bishop of Repton to discuss and finalise the profile.

Drawing up the profile was a very useful exercise for the PCC members. It made us look afresh at what the church's mission was and how we were fulfilling it. Drawing up a profile of the person we would like made us soon realise that the only person that would fulfill our every desire was Jesus himself (or a female equivalent!) So we will have to compromise!

### **What happens next?**

The profile will be sent, by the Bishop of Derby, to anyone who expresses an interest in the position of rector or who the Bishop thinks he might want to move to our parish.

Let's pray that the person that God wants to be our new rector will soon apply and be appointed reasonably quickly.

**Mark Hoare**

## **PEOPLE AND JESUS TRADE UNIONIST ALAN SHELDON**

How does my faith relate to my job?

How do I show the love of Jesus to the folk I come into daily contact with?  
Do I portray the characteristics of Christ?

I work as a maintenance engineer on shifts at a local Carton Manufacturing Company, formally part of Robinsons of Chesterfield and now a part of a Multinational Group in the food packaging industry. The company and its employees have experienced many changes over the last 5 to 10 years with notably a decreasing workforce (due to redundancies) from 220 to 140 and a consequent increase in individual's workload. This is not unusual in today's industry at large. We operate in a highly competitive, cost driven (by the supermarkets) business environment where some of our competitors have gone, or are going, under. This is a constant threat for us also.

A Christian is called to "serve" and as part of my concern for my "neighbour" I have served as a trade union lay officer of the Graphical, Paper & Media Union for the past few years, the "Deputy Father of the Chapel" in GPMU speak, I chair the Health & Hygiene Committee, and I am a company Pension Scheme Trustee.

The print unions were very powerful (pre Wapping and Mrs Thatcher) but in the current industrial climate have had to be less confrontational and adopt a more reasoned and co-operative approach, a working partnership that benefits both the workers and the company. I personally see this as a good thing. We all know what "absolute power" does!

I try to be fair and examine both sides of any differences, which can lead to me getting "flak" from both sides and feeling like the "piggy in the middle", but if good sense, justice and "mercy", to use a biblical word, come out of it I am happy. Blessed are the peacemakers they say; though my own peace is often non-existent.

I know I sometimes let God down, maybe an unkind or irreverent comment, loss of temper or just too busy or tired to care, and for that I need forgiveness. But on the whole I hope I show some qualities of the Lord in my workplace, and usually with a touch of humour... most important in our more unsmiling world.

When I manage to help an individual in a personal or quiet way (perhaps a disciplinary appeal or a special need for an extension of sick pay provision), and they say thank you it all becomes worthwhile. Even with the many that don't say thank you, if I know I've done the best for the greatest number, I can be satisfied with that.

My work is challenging and at times very stressful, and I need and receive love and support from those who share my faith at home and at church. We can all help to carry each other's burdens, which is what Jesus wants us to do. On my motor bike number plate I have a slogan that reads "What on Earth are you doing for Heaven's Sake?"

Thank God that He never changes, as our turbulent times seem constantly and increasingly to do. Going back to my three questions at the beginning, I think I've answered the first two. You'd need to ask the folk at work about the last one!

Alan Sheldon

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## **Obituaries: Roger Key 1940 - 2002 and Heather Fox 1966 - 2002**

Roger was a much-loved and respected member of St-Peter's church, and indeed, throughout the whole village of Holymoorside. He lived in the village with his wife Betty for 39 years, and it was here they raised their daughters, Heather and Sarah. He was well known in the area through his job of 25 years as a milkman, and then helping his brother-in-law, the builder Howard (Tom) Stockton. Roger helped in the construction of the new church centre at St. John's and latterly played a great part in the extension at St. Peter's.

Both Roger and Betty were confirmed under Christopher Frith and became active members of St.Peter's, with Roger taking over as church warden. This job, as many people are aware, is demanding in so many ways, in order to ensure the efficient running of the church. Roger was initially reluctant to take on this role but was soon able to put his many skills and affable personality to great use. His often heard phrase "Oh! We can tackle that" or "I know someone who can", was his response when help was needed.

Once settled into his role, his worth was obvious to one and all. Devoted and proud of his church, he was always approachable, direct and positive. Roger was strong, physically, spiritually and emotionally, as exemplified in his attitude when faced with his illness, cancer of the esophagus.

Roger played a vital role together with our other church warden, Ian Wright, in our new church building, organizing and helping teams to decorate and clean. He certainly left his mark on the building, quite literally, when a pot of black paint, left unnoticed on top of some scaffolding, fell on top of him and covered him from head to foot. To this day the blackened floorboards remain as a mark of this event, fortunately beneath the carpet!

Ours has been a double tragedy at St.Peter's and in the village of Holymoorside, as Roger's daughter Heather, died only a week after him. Heather was a 'chip off the old block', with her father's generosity of spirit and strength of character in facing and fighting her own cancer. Their illnesses seemed intertwined, with Heather being diagnosed as Roger left hospital. They supported and encouraged each other along the way and Heather's words at the death of her father, "I have lost my rock" seem now all the more poignant.

Heather too was an active member of St.Peter's, helping in Sunday club and also the church D.C.C. She leaves two daughters, Alex and Ellie, with the precious memory of a mother who was courageous and loving in the face of great adversity, and her husband John who was also devoted to her.

Roger and Heather will both be dearly missed, and it seems appropriate that they are buried side by side, in what Alex and Ellie call the 'church garden', clearly visible through the altar window of the church they both loved and which loved them.

Polly Ryan.

## Never get too comfortable!

My Christian life began back in 1950 in Manchester when I met people who spoke to me about Jesus who could change my life and offer me a new eternal relationship. It was their spontaneous joy and my own deep need of forgiveness that the Lord used to draw me to himself. There was also kindled in me a desire to help other people find a saving faith in Jesus Christ. Yet it was a disturbing experience, it changed the whole course of my life.

Most of you will know that I am married to Nanette. We have a grown up family of four living in various parts of the country and four grandchildren, who descend on us frequently. Chesterfield being where it is proves to be a handy dropping off point when they are travelling around.

After forty odd years serving as an evangelist with the Church Army based mainly in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Suffolk and Norfolk as well as mission work in other parts, it might have been the natural thing to drop out and leave things to others. However, it is never that simple, the Lord's agenda is often quite different from ours and has a habit of moving us on to something new, just at the point when we think we have got it made. There is something profoundly disturbing about following Jesus

I have observed that those churches which are serious about growth have reshaped their leadership structure and developed a collaborate leadership. This appears to be what St. Paul has in mind in Ephesians (Eph 4:11-13). Once we decided to go down this route at St Thomas it seemed to me that, under the Lord, the best way I could offer my support was to get involved and help carry it forward to the next stage. Hence I found myself facilitating the Nurture and Evangelism team.

Over the years formal ways and means of doing evangelism and nurture have changed radically. In my lifetime focus of evangelism has moved through Parish Missions, Billy Graham type missions, Youth coffee bars, Evangelistic house groups, Church Growth methods, Church planting, Nurture groups such as Alpha and developing new kinds of churches. Most, if not all, of these I have been involved in at some level. However, we need to look forward and not back. This is where it gets very disturbing.

It seems to me that the biggest challenge facing us today is to make an impact on a secular culture, which has little place for God. Clearly we have good news of how the crucified and risen Jesus can change people and communities. Yet the challenge for all of us is to be involved with people in our neighbourhood and wider community and to *share the love of Jesus*. What is required is *talking pictures of Jesus* i.e. ordinary Christians sharing faith in word and action.

**David Sanderson.**

## Ministry and Mission Leadership Team Report January to July 2002

The Team meets each month for prayer, reflection, discussion and decision making. A lot of the Team's work is done meeting both formally and informally with people who hold leadership roles in each section. It is not the purpose of this paper to comment on these activities. That work is done in the regular reports, which go to the PCC meetings.

However, the following are some of the more important things that have been dealt with over the first half of 2002.

At the beginning it was not exactly clear as to how the Team should proceed. A large amount of time was spent simply trying to get a clearer picture of how St. Thomas' with its multiplicity of organisations actually functioned. While the Team Leaders have vision as to where future action could be taken, a further question has emerged. 'Have we already got as much going on as we can cope with?' especially as some of our groups are crying out for people to help.

It was against this background that a discussion took place about the starting of new ventures. New ventures were defined as 'Long term projects which demand resources i.e. space, people and /or money'. A church must have some policy about such. Questions also need to be asked as to how such projects fit in with our overall policy and how they relate to other things we are doing. It may even be that if we begin something new, we must consider which of the things we are already doing we need to stop. Such new ventures would first have to be presented to the Mission and Ministry team by the Team Leader of that section for consideration by the Team.

The proposed new development of our premises has regularly appeared on the agenda. Much good progress has been made in presenting the idea to the church and discussion will have to continue. What is clear to the members of the team is that any improvements ought not simply to be centred on our own needs, but will provide a platform from which we can serve God in this community.

Preparing for the interregnum has also taken time. With Christopher leaving it was important to find a person who would temporarily head up the Worship and Teaching section of the work. It is assumed that a future Rector will take over this role when appointed. For the period of the interregnum we are grateful to Robin Balch for offering to serve the Lord in this way. There are also a number of other roles that the Rector normally fulfils which need to be covered, such as contact with fringe people and those who come for Baptism. At present we are in the process of trying to obtain cover in these areas.

Please continue to support us by prayer and understanding as we try to enable the church and its members to *share the love of Jesus* more effectively.

**David Sanderson.**

## **From the Frith Family**

It is just after our wonderful farewell and we feel overwhelmed, dizzy and very, very thankful.

We feel so privileged to have spent seventeen years living and serving among you and to have been part of God's work at St Thomas', St Peter's and (until 2000) St John's. We shall treasure our memories.

Your incredibly generous presents - the (almost) top of the range hi-fi, the lovely garden seats, the photo album brimful of character, the cheque which is being used for a smaller kitchen table, and the flower arrangement, to say nothing of an extraordinary variety of extra gifts - will long serve as reminders. Thank you seems a very weak word, but it's the best we can find.

We continue to praise our God "on every remembrance of you". We love you,

**Christopher, Pam, Sarah and Daniel**

## **A Perfect Gift For Christmas**

During the coronation, the new monarch is presented with the most precious gift known to man - it is a book, the bible - the word of God. At Christmas time, it can be difficult to find that perfect gift for friends and family. Have you considered a Christian book?

The bookstall presents many and varied books throughout the year. At present it is displaying two different children's publications. One is called "Hello God It's me" directed at younger children, and the second is titled "Stories of Jesus" which is more suitable for older children. Both books have recently been reviewed in Ploughshare and are now available to purchase from the bookstall.

What about a Christmas gift for loved ones who are perhaps a little older? Have you discovered the wonderful series of small books by Eddie Askew? Both he and his wife joined the Leprosy Mission in 1950, and worked for 15 years in India, before transferring to London, where Eddie became the International Director of the Mission in 1974 until his retirement in 1987. During this time Eddie produced a series of meditations, which were published in a monthly newsletter for the Leprosy Mission's workers around the world.

These meditations have now been compiled into six books, each with approximately thirty chapters. The author has added a prayer and a drawing (or a painting in later publications) to compliment each meditation. Eddie Askew is certainly a gifted writer and artist, and these volumes are moving and thought provoking. Below is a small sample of part of one of his prayers.

*Lord in the quietness  
I feel your love  
washing over me.  
Lifting the dust, cleansing the dirt.  
I feel your hands, firm,  
gentle, with the towel.  
I can take that.  
What I find hard, too hard to take,  
is seeing you kneeling  
at my feet.*

In the foreword to the sixth edition Wendy Craig puts it like this: "You have helped to open my eyes and my mind, and expanded and enriched my whole experience of God's love".

Now what could be a more perfect Christmas gift.

## **THE EARTH SUMMIT AND YOU**

It is often hard to relate to things on a world-wide scale, but the recent Earth Summit - the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg - is relevant to all of us, especially each one of us as Christians.

God created a beautiful and awesome earth, entrusting us to live in it. As creative beings, made in God's image, mankind has creatively developed technologies which have brought significant benefits to all sorts of aspects of our lives. But in many cases they have been a mixed blessing, leading to using up resources, exploitation, injustice and serious environmental problems. We are all affected, but the severest impact is often on the vulnerable and the poor.

The growing global population and changing lifestyles consume resources and change environments at an ever-increasing rate, and generate mountains of waste. In the 'West' we use more than our fair share, and far more than is sustainable: CO2 emissions (a measure of fossil-fuel usage) per person in the USA are over 5 times the world average, in the UK it's over 2.5 times the average. There is widespread scientific consensus that increased use of fossil fuels is leading to climate change affecting sea levels and changing weather conditions. Although hard to predict, there are very likely to be devastating consequences for people and wildlife in already vulnerable areas, such as more floods and more droughts and famine. By 2050 there could be as many as 150 million 'environmental' refugees.

In 1992 at the Rio Summit 179 countries looked at the link between environmental problems, economic conditions and social justice. From this emerged several outcomes including:

- The Commission on Climate Change, leading to the Koyoto protocol agreeing to limit the increase in 'greenhouse gases'
- A convention on bio-diversity to sustain environments
- Agenda 21 - the adoption of national sustainable development strategies by 2002 - yes, Chesterfield Borough Council has one!

150 countries, with some very notable exceptions, signed up to these conventions. Technologies have improved greatly for better efficiency in resource use, renewable resources, re-cycling and waste management, but 10 years on there is still massive room for improvement. But big changes can be made at relatively small cost, but there are conflicts between taking action and our own interests, personal, national, economic, and political. We want to shop responsibly but it's quicker and easier to pick up what looks good in the supermarket and not ask too many questions; our choice and "free" trade may be damaging or exploiting people in developing countries who may, for example, be growing our coffee rather than their own food, then having to buy imported products. To take action for a fairer, more sustainable world will cost us, and may affect our comfort and standard of living which we take for granted. Governments alone cannot make the changes. They also need to come from the "grass roots", with partnership between individuals, organisations, businesses, governments and nations. Involvement of churches and of individuals within them is essential in the process of change.

## **So what is sustainable development?**

"Development that globally meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Or, more emotively, "not cheating on our brothers and sisters, or on our children".

This involves very complex trade issues with major implications, including debt repayment/ cancellation and international trade rules, all of which are politically sensitive. We have to think of our interdependence- how the way we live affects others. Justice and equity become an uncomfortable and unavoidable part of the picture. Remember Jesus' saying that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man- to enter heaven.

We may not be able to grapple with all the details and the big issues, but we can look at our own lifestyles, the resources we use, the waste we create, the effect we have on the environment, and we can broaden this to our home, workplace, community and government by each taking our own bit of action.

God cares for his creation; we can respond in our stewardship of it, as well as showing our love for our neighbour, and our desire for justice in how we live.

"Striving to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain the life of the earth" sounds grand, but doing your bit to look after God's earth in day to day actions and attitudes can be a real witness, as well as starting to make a difference. An article on practical ideas will follow. Meanwhile here is the Christian Ecology Link prayer:

Creating God, you have given us a vision of a new heaven and earth ....

- Resources conserved
- Earth tended,
- Atmosphere cleansed,
- Trees planted,
- Injustice ended,
- Oceans teeming,
- Nations at peace.

A Prayer:

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, alert nations, enthuse churches,  
Receive our commitment and so entwine our lives with your  
purpose;  
Earth and heaven will then sing of your glory.  
Amen.

**Rosie Welch**

## **Memories of Treasure Seekers (Holiday Club 2002)**

The summer already seems a long time ago, but the memories of Treasure Seekers still live on.

It was a wonderful week of fun, learning and friendship. We had 140 children each day and about 180 over the whole week. To lead this year we had over 80 people involved in one capacity or another. It was an incredible experience for both the children and the leaders.

One of the most exciting parts of the week was when the children wrote their prayers. Some of their prayers were amazing, and it was great to see what they had learnt and understood.

I'm still meeting parents and children who are talking about Treasure Seekers. The appreciation in the community and the awe at the crafts that the children brought home are still being expressed. The week really was a great success.

To finish I'd just like to thank all the people who made Treasure Seekers possible and all the children that came and joined in. We do not know what affect this week has had on the lives of these children, but we pray that God will continue to work in their lives as He was during Treasure Seekers.

**Neil Roper**