



**ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
WALTON-ON-THAMES**

NEWSLETTER

Volume 70 No 2

MARCH 2014

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*"Is the spring coming?" he said. "What is it like?"...
"It is the sun shining on the rain and the rain falling on the sunshine..."
Frances Hodgson Burnett, 'The Secret Garden'*



Dear Friends

With the weather much less wet and windy, and with the river levels gradually falling, the plight of those who have been flooded out has been pushed from the headlines and off the front pages. Yet their ordeal is very far from over: the 'spirit of the blitz' may have got them to this point, but the slog of rebuilding homes and lives stretches ahead of them over the coming months.

Without wishing in any way to demean those people or downplay their suffering, I can't help feeling that we may share some of some of their emotions as we come to our Annual Meeting this month. Why? Because it's the time of year when we look back and take stock of what we have both achieved and lived through together over the last 12 months — but it's also a time for looking forward to the year ahead, with the opportunities and challenges which it will bring.

So we celebrate our successes; we smile wryly at the memory of some of the things that maybe didn't work out quite as they should have; we shed a tear for friends and loved ones with whom we no longer share this earthly journey — and we try and summon up the energy and enthusiasm we know we shall need for the times ahead.

The Annual Reports provide a focus for our recollecting and celebrating, as well as giving us a chance to acknowledge the individual efforts which have kept the show on the road — and I would like to take this opportunity to say a very big 'thank you' to Anna, who has been a tower of strength in so many ways, and to all of you who do the practical things that keep the church going, from managing the lettings to changing the light-bulbs (and everything in between).

After that, it seems hard, perhaps even unfair, to suggest that we should go straight on to think about the year ahead, when the same — and maybe more — will be asked of us. Yet as a congregation we do need to plan ahead; we do need to reflect on why we are here and what we should be doing: if we hadn't done some of that planning at the beginning of last year, we wouldn't be doing Messy Church now.

That is of course what our Church Conversation on 22nd March is all about: looking forward, sharing hopes and fears to be sure — but also opening ourselves to let the Spirit fill us with the energy and enthusiasm that we need. See you there!

Your minister,

Ronilly

Ecumenical Lenten Groups

“Will You Join in Our Crusade?”

Victor Hugo meets Bible Study

This year's Lenten groups will look at some of the issues raised by the very popular musical "Les Misérables" which has played to tens of millions of people worldwide. The long, rambling book by Victor Hugo, published in 1862, was turned into a musical in 1980 and then into a film that gained three Oscars in 2013.

Steve Mann, who devised the Lent study course (which skilfully interweaves the Gospel narrative with the story of “Les Misérables”), describes on the Methodist website (www.Methodist.org.uk) how he wrote the course which, with seven sections, offers the option of carrying on for about two weeks after Easter.

Over seven weeks, this series of Bible studies and reflections will help us look again at the Gospel narratives of the ministry of Jesus and discover how His death and resurrection can shape and transform our lives. We will be looking at seven study headings: Grace, Responsibility, Truth, Compassion, Fellowship, Darkness and Reconciliation. Seeing the musical or the film (in the cinema or at home on DVD) is preferable, but not essential.

The course will begin during the week following Sunday 9th March.

On **Monday evenings**, a group to be led by Graham Pearcey – well-known to us all in St Andrew's – will be held at the home of Ruth and Robin Evans, 57 Mount Felix, River Mount, Walton on Thames KT12 2PJ - 01932 229301.

Groups will take place on **Wednesdays at St Andrew's**, in the Hersham Room, starting from 2.00 – 4.00 pm (Contacts: Sue Groves - 01932 562350 and Anne Fitzgerald - 01932 228732).

On **Thursday evenings** they will be at the home of Sandra and Colin Wright, 49 St Vincent Road Walton on Thames starting at 7.45 pm (contact number for Sandra and Colin is 01932 224877).

A fourth option is to follow the course via an internet group led by Dave Paterson (dave.paterson@hotmail.co.uk).

We will have a sign-up sheet in the hall after the services. Please add your name to the appropriate list so that the course material can be purchased – there has been an excellent response so far.

Alternatively, speak to Anne Fitzgerald or Sue Groves.

Anne Fitzgerald

SERVICES AND OTHER KEY DATES MARCH 2014
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Note: *The Prayer Group has been transformed into the Lenten Group, Wednesdays at 2.00 pm from 12 March, for the duration of Lent, at St Andrew's, Hersham Room*

Sunday 2 March <i>(Transfiguration Sunday)</i>	10.30 am	Sunday Worship with Holy Communion
Monday 3 March	2.00 pm	Bridge Club Hersham Room
Tuesday 4 March	2.00 pm 8.00 pm	Ladies' Guild Hersham Room Elders' Meeting Hersham Room
Wednesday 5 March	10.30 – 12 noon	Coffee Morning at the home of Marigold Crampton (<i>see page 7</i>)
Friday 7 March	10.00 am	Women's World Day of Prayer St Mary's Walton-on-Thames
Saturday 8 March		Wessex Synod (Basingstoke)
Sunday 9 March <i>(Lent 1)</i>	10.30 am 12 noon	Sunday Worship Church AGM
	3.30 pm	Weybridge URC Induction of Rev Dr Gerald Munro
Monday 10 – Wednesday 12 March		URC Mission Council <i>(Minister will attend)</i>
Tuesday 11 March	8.00 pm	Development Committee Meeting <i>(Minister at Mission Council)</i>
Wednesday 12 March	2.00- 4.00 pm	Lenten Group Hersham Room <i>(see page3 for details)</i>
Sunday 16 March <i>(Lent 2)</i>	10.30 am 3.00 pm	Sunday Worship Messy Church
Monday 17 March	2.00 pm	Bridge Club Hersham Room
Tuesday 18 March	2.00 pm 8.00 pm	Ladies' Guild Hersham Room Extra Elders' Meeting <i>(to prepare for the 'Church Conversation')</i>
Wednesday 19 March	2.00- 4.00 pm	Lenten Group Hersham Room

COPY DATE FOR APRIL ISSUE WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH
ALL ITEMS TO THE EDITOR, NORMA REID,
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Email: aristocats.2000@talktalk.net

SATURDAY 22 MARCH

09.30 am

CHURCH CONVERSATION



(Breakfast from 8.30 am)

Sunday 23 March
(Lent 3)

10.30 am

All-Age Worship

Wednesday 26 March

2.00- 4.00 pm Lenten Group, Hersham Room



Clocks spring forward at 0100 am Sunday 30 March

Sunday 30 March
(Lent 4 – Mothering Sunday)

***11.00 am**

**‘All- Age’ service
with Brownie Parade**

** Note later start due to road closures.*

 **Fairtrade after the service** 

ST ANDREW’S ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING (AGM)
Sunday 9 March 2014 at 12 noon

Thanks from Anna to everyone who sent in their Annual Reports. She has coordinated them into one document which you should have as an Addendum to this Newsletter.

Do, also, pick up a copy of the Minutes of the Church Meeting of 8 December 2013 from the Porch, if you have not already done so.

As reminded in the February issue of the Newsletter, if you have an item of a substantive nature for Any Other Business (AOB), this should be submitted to either the Minister or Anna Crawford know a week prior to the meeting (that’s NOW!).

Thank you!

JUNIOR CHURCH



During All-Age worship, we talked about how Jesus suggested we should dare to be different by showing others that we love them.

“We should love everyone, just as God loves everyone.”

We cut out heart-shaped cards and arranged pictures of people of different ages and backgrounds, to remind us that God loves everybody



YOU CAN'T BEAT KIDS.....

Author and lecturer Leo Buscaglia once talked about a contest he was asked to judge. The purpose of the contest was to find the most caring child.

The winner was a four-year-old child, whose next-door neighbour was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's garden, climbed on to his lap and just sat there. When his mother asked him what he had said to the neighbour, the little boy just said: “Nothing, I just helped him cry.”

Whenever you are disappointed with your place in life, think about Jamie.

Jamie was trying for a part in the school play. His mother told a friend that he had set his heart on being in it but she was afraid he would not be chosen. On the day the parts were given out, his mother and her friend went to collect him after school. Jamie rushed up to them, eyes shining with excitement and pride. “Guess what, Mum,” he shouted (and his words should be a lesson to us all) “I’ve been chosen to clap and cheer!”



COFFEE MORNING

**Wednesday 5 March
10.30 – 12 noon**

Your host will be Marigold Crampton
9 Hurtwood Road
Fieldcommon Lane
Walton-on-Thames KT12 3QP

Proceeds to British Lung Foundation

All welcome!

✠ 'Streams in the Desert' ✠

Friday
7th March

Women's
World Day
of Prayer

All are welcome



Praying for Egypt

Service starts at 10.00 am

St Mary's Parish Church,
Church Street, Walton-on-Thames

Speaker - Sister Sheila Samuels
(Church Army)

Followed by refreshments

www.wwdp-natcomm.org Registered Charity Number 233242

**! DON'T FORGET THE AGM !
Sunday 9 March at 12 noon**



BRIDGE CLUB

**Monday 3 and Monday 17 March
2.00 pm**

Hersham Room



LADIES' GUILD

**Tuesday 4 and Tuesday 18 March
2.00 pm**

Hersham Room

PRAYER GROUP is being
replaced by Lenten groups
throughout Lent.

See page 3 for full details



**CLOCKS SPRING FORWARD
AT 0100 HOURS ON SUNDAY
30 MARCH**

Mothering Sunday Service Sunday 30 March 11.00 am

Due to road closures (half-marathon) the
service will begin half an hour later
than usual, at 11am.

Coffee will be available both before and
after the service.



CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Dave and Caren, Leah and Xavier McBain
have moved. They are embarking on a
new venture, to run a guesthouse in
Sutherland. Their address is:

Davar
Lochinver
Highland
IV27 4LJ

The website is:

www.davar-lochinver.co.uk and telephone
number 01571 844501.

They would be delighted to welcome
friends from St Andrew's for "a cuppa and
a chinwag" as well as anyone else who
might like a wee break in what is
unquestionably one of the most beautiful
parts of Scotland.

Our cover photograph 'The Female
Chaffinch' is ©Marilyn Barbone

IN PRAISE OF CHURCH MAGAZINES

Those of you who read the *Daily Telegraph* may have spotted an upbeat letter in the issue of 29 January, in praise of Parish magazines (or, in our case, St Andrew's Newsletter). Unfortunately, despite having contacted the *Daily Telegraph*, I am not allowed to reproduce it, as copyright belongs to its author, not the newspaper (you will, no doubt, be able to read it on their website).

Its author expresses surprise at the decline of 'the oldest parish magazine at Haworth, West Yorkshire'. It seems that her own church, in a different part of the country, produces a very successful parish magazine that does not sound dissimilar to our own in content, with regular features from the vicar, a church diary and children's pages, amongst other items. Some parishioners have contributed memories of days gone by (this sounds like an interesting idea...). The author ends her letter by commenting that the magazine is an invaluable way of keeping in touch those who are no longer able to get out and about, and especially for those who do not have computers. So true! I hope that our readers feel the same.

So, please, keep those articles, snippets - and even memories – coming, so that we can make our Newsletter the best that it can be.

Ed

PARAPROSDOKIAN (from the Greek meaning "against expectation")

*The impact of this figure of speech or phrase is surprising in a way that causes the listener or reader to re-frame or re-interpret the first part.
(Thanks to Norman Shouler for this contribution. Ed)*

Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

The early bird might get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.

I didn't say it was your fault: I said I was blaming you.

Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but checks when you say the paint is wet?

You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.

A bus is a vehicle that runs twice as fast when you are after it as when you are in it.

A clear conscience is usually a sign of a bad memory.

To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism, to steal from many is research.

SPRING TRADITIONS



ROMANIA - MARTIȘOR

Mărțișor is the traditional celebration of the beginning of the spring in Romania and Moldova, on 1 March. The day's name is the diminutive of March (in Romanian *Marție*), and thus means something like "little or dear March". Men offer women a small decorative object also called *Mărțișor* consisting of a jewel or symbolizing a flower, an animal or other symbols such as a four-leaved clover, heart or chimney sweep, tied to a red and white string. This is a symbol of the coming spring, which the woman wears pinned to her blouse on this day, and up to two weeks after. Occasionally, women also give such gifts to men.

This custom is believed to bring joy and good luck and can be traced back 8,000 years, when people use to present each other with red and white pebbles in a string. The red cord symbolised winter and the white one spring.



Likewise, in ancient times, they were coins tied by black and white wool threads. Gold, silver or bronze coins were chosen depending on the social status. They were worn round the neck or the wrist and were later named 'marts' or 'martigus' (diminutives for March).

The Dacians (ancestors of the Romanians) believed these amulets brought fertility, beauty and prevented sunburn. They wore them when the trees started blooming and they were later hung on the tree branches.



Folklore scientists also found Martișor variants in the ancient civilization. They believe they are directly related to God Mars' heralds, because it was on the Ides of March, when snow had not yet melted throughout the Roman Empire, that military campaigns could start. Therefore, red and white signifies that very day, as well as vitality and victory on the one hand and purification and inauguration on the other.

It was also said that white and red were strong amulets against evil eye and a token of purity and innocence.

The Romanian folkloric tradition also relates Martișor to the legend of Baba Dochia. In Romanian mythology, Baba Dochia, or The Old Dokia, is a figure identified with the return of spring. She is sometimes imagined as "an old woman who insults the month of March when she goes out with a herd of sheep or goats." The Romanian Dokia personifies mankind's impatience in waiting for the return of spring.

The Martișor custom is part of the ritual scenario of the time's renewal, Dochia's symbolic death and birth. According to other traditions, it was even Dochia who was spinning the threads while she was driving the sheep back up to the mountains. Thus, because Martișor is inseparable from Dochia tradition in the Carpathians, we can certainly say it is a very old Romanian custom found in all the areas where Romanians and Aromanians live, later taken over by other south-eastern European peoples.

Sources: Romanian National News Agency (AGERPRES) and Wikipedia

I have experienced this tradition and can say that it is an original and lovely way of celebrating the coming of Spring! Ed

St Andrew's URC (Walton) ARTPEACE Initiative



'WE HAVE NO WORD FOR STRANGER in Shona' said Lovemore James. 'Zimbabweans love one another and each day we greet passersby and enjoy conversation especially about the rains. We had a wet weekend as God blessed us with heavy showers. At present life is good for most Zimbabweans; the seed bought with URC donations is growing into a bumper crop. Around the outskirts of the ghetto you will see folk with hoes walking to the fields. We are praying for more rain as they bring joy and hope for us all. I also pray my sculpture sales will cover the cost of ammonia nitrate fertiliser to further enrich the soil.



Abraham: As if to underline Lovemore's (appropriate name!) friendship comment, the next day Mike stated: 'On my way home from Silveira House after meeting couriers Casey and daughter Kathy, I met a man called Abraham and we got chatting. He had been to SH seeking help but they were overwhelmed by beggars. He was robbed at his home. During the scuffle the robbers hit his leg with an iron bar but despite the pain he could not afford treatment so can't walk properly. I sympathised with his predicament because I still cannot bear to wear shoes after my recent beating at the mine. I gave him a dollar to buy food and asked to take his photo to show St Andrew's.

We exchanged addresses and he thanked me again and again. Please help my new friend who lives alone: his wife ran away due to their extreme poverty.' Despite only having a few dollars to his name, Mike felt obliged to share the little he had with Abraham who is now reduced to begging.

SUPPORT: Casey, an amazing character & Kathy took over some gifts on our behalf and returned with 40kgs of carvings in their luggage! (Above right: Casey, a professional musician with air hostess daughter Kathy).



THE SMILES SAY IT ALL: The latest photos above of Fradrek and Catherine show their



delight at being able to attend another school year. Their widowed mother is lost for words to thank everyone. Fradrek now a football captain (his school think he has leadership qualities) and his sister Catherine a class monitor and school prefect, are so appreciative of having a chance in life. They still help their mother in the fields at weekends as they like most families must grow

their own food in order to survive. Another heart warming example of progress made by two of the five children we support and what a difference we can make to their lives.

TRAGEDY: Peter Kananji's family were recently woken at 2am by cries from their five month old son who became very ill. Peter tried desperately to get help but it proved hopeless at that hour: ambulances are virtually nonexistent and one has to pay for the privilege. The baby died at 4am.



Artpeace walked miles to comfort the family and contributed what little they had towards the cost of a very basic funeral. Little Peter was buried at 3pm that same afternoon according to their custom.

Artist Peter said: 'John. To bury Peter was not difficult bcz of all the prayers and love from your friends. I will give you a hundred thanks for that. I don't know what is happening to my life – it's so hard. I now struggle to



pay my bus fare every day to take food to Priscilla my wife who is in hospital with chest pains.'

(Above left: Peter on right in red shirt at graveside. Above right: Baby Peter with family taken the day before he died).

SOUTHWARK VISIT ARTPEACE! It's not every day I receive a phone call from a bishop but two weeks ago, Christopher Chessun, the Bishop of Southwark rang before leaving for Zimbabwe. He



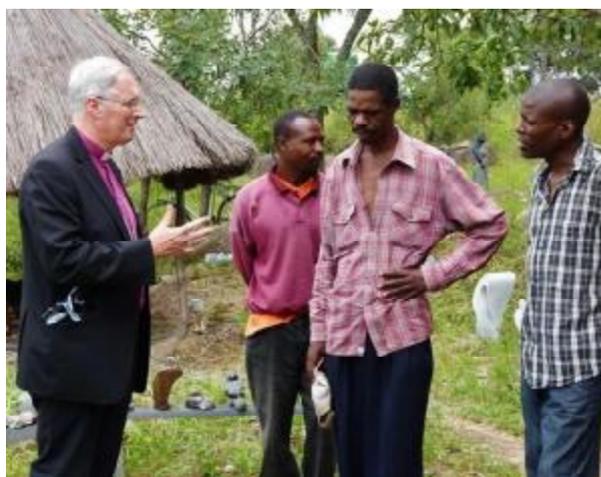
was moved by baby Peter whose death was mentioned in Dean Andrew Nunn's blog and on Twitter. Fr David HB said: 'For a few days, baby Peter became quite famous. So last Sunday 23rd Feb. the bishop visited the people whose stories he had heard and whose sculptures find



their way to the Cathedral shop 6000 miles away. It was a marvellous visit full of warmth and concern on the part of the bishop and his two friends. Artpeace turned out in full and explained something of their lives and hopes, and also their difficulties in present day Zimbabwe. Artist Peter Kananji, showed the bishop a photo of baby Peter, who died suddenly two weeks ago. Bishop Christopher went out of his way to console Peter and had his photo taken with him (left).



The bishop and his companions, Fr Mark and Canon Wendy, toured the "workshop" amongst the clearings in the trees, admiring their artistry and the different coloured stones that had been sought out in remote places. He ended his visit with a little impromptu talk about the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe's five dioceses all of which he had visited during the week and then led a beautiful prayer for all present especially for the sculptors and



their families. We were honoured and grateful for his visit and that of his travelling companions.' The relationship between St A's, Southwark and Artpeace continues to grow. **Johnston Simpson**

FLOWER POWER



Tom Stevenson writes:

“Having received so many good wishes from ‘St Andrew’s family’ during my stay in hospital, it really was the icing on the cake to receive Church flowers on 11 February, delivered by May Dow. With quite a few buds still to open they serve as a reminder to me of the many friends I have at St Andrew’s. Thank you.”

Dorothy Rushworth says:

“My grateful thanks to St Andrew’s for the lovely flowers May brought to me. Sadly, Ghislaine couldn’t join her as dear Tom had been taken to hospital during the night. It is always nice to see May and I did enjoy chatting with her. We all wish Tom a speedy return to the Church!”

Nancy Hampton was unable to get to the January lunch because she was (unusually for her!) unwell. However, she was much cheered when May Dow and Marigold Crampton called round with a lovely bouquet of spring flowers for her, which were greatly appreciated and they had a lovely chat.

Bill Murray says:

“At the beginning of the New Year, I was delighted to receive a beautiful cyclamen plant from the Communion Table. This has given me great pleasure and I wish to thank Irene Pearson for her thoughtfulness in arranging to send it to me. Many thanks.”

Margaret Ward writes:

“Early in February, I was delighted to receive a beautiful bouquet of flowers from the Communion Table. This was kindly delivered by Marigold Crampton and May Dow. Thanks very much.”

Tricia Coaker says thank you for the Church flowers from the Communion Table. They were a lovely surprise and she enjoyed arranging them.

A message from **Suzanne Hirst**:

“I would like to say a very big thank you to May and Ghislaine who popped in last Monday, with a beautiful bunch of flowers from the altar for me. Having been away from church for a few weeks due to problems with my neck and then a bad fall, it was a lovely welcome back and was very much appreciated.”

Irene Pearson says:

“A big ‘thank you’ to May and Ghislaine, who delivered a beautiful arrangement of flowers, donated by Netta, after I returned from Scotland following a family bereavement. I am so sorry I missed them as I had an optician’s appointment but the flowers certainly cheered me up as I was feeling very low.”

