

TRING TEAM TIMES

ALL SAINTS
ST CROSS
ST JOHN THE BAPTIST
ST MARY
ST PETER & ST PAUL

Edition 22

December 2008

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What does the future hold?

The future will be what we make it together.

The theme of this edition has been very much one of hopeful anticipation of new beginnings. Obviously that's an entirely appropriate sentiment for this Advent season and, as Christmas approaches and the New Year beckons, we have much to look forward to. We have a new young family in our new young rectory. We have a new vicar and her family joining the team in February and living in Aldbury Vicarage. We have a new energy and excitement about the opportunities that face the community in running the Parish. We have a new vision about making the life of the Christian community one of growth and education, one of sharing and caring for each other and one of openness and outreach.

On pages 2 and 3 there are details of the working action groups throughout the Parish and an open invitation to all to join in and get involved. In these troubled financial and social times, it's easy for a community of people to withdraw and become isolated. It's arguably much better for the members of that community to move more closely together to talk about problems, share in new opportunities and ensure that those who are experiencing difficulties are cared for and comforted.

"See how these Christians love one another" was a somewhat sarcastic remark made long ago but it has a real kernel of truth at its heart. In a divided world, any community that cares for its members and looks after its less advantaged individuals stands out like something of a beacon. If Tring Team Parish is able to live its life more openly, to welcome new ideas, new involvement and new excitement, we will see growth in this place and a blossoming of our true potential.

Like the people of the United States of America with their new beginning on January 20th, we ourselves face a time of hopefulness and opportunity. Let's make sure that we embrace it and support Huw, the wardens and action group members and all who plan, organise and deliver the activities of our Parish fully. To return to that quote of Mike Watkin's again, "Getting involved makes you feel involved – and useful". It's a good way to live. Christianity is good for you – and for the community which we all share.

Grahame Senior

The Rock

What is its future?
What will we make of it?

This poor old rock with its history of rejection, crime and vandalism is now in our possession. Will we use it wisely? "The stone that the builders rejected..." is often the one that can prove the most important building block. Rocks are very potent symbols. They last forever and they can be used to build or to destroy. We'd like to use this rock as a building block for our community.



It's going to be polished up and nicely mounted and will then become an annual award made by the readers of this magazine under the guidance of the rector and the PCC to a person who has made a real contribution to building the community in any given year. In this way, this rock will help bring us together and celebrate what we can do when we focus our energies on growth. Watch out for the rules of the Rock Award in the next edition.

The Editor

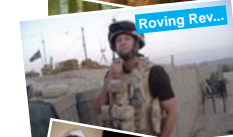
Comments and ideas for future editions - The floor is yours

Tring Team Times is designed to be an open forum for all members of Tring Team Parish. Let us have your views and comments and let us know what subjects you'd like covered in future editions. Our rector offers us the prospect of greater openness and involvement at every level in Parish life. Talking to Tring Team Times is one way we can embrace that.

Spreading The News

If you can think of anyone who'd enjoy reading Tring Team Times or getting further information on Parish activities and opportunities, please do let us have their details. Mike Watkin and Vivienne Child update the circulation list for every edition, so please do pass on any changes you're aware of.

NEW BEGINNINGS...



Spring will soon follow winter

Featured articles in this edition:

- New Team Vicar Joins February 1st
- New Rectory for the Rector
- New Opportunities for Action and Education in the Parish
- New Community Initiative for RE
- New Appetite for the Return to Kyrgyzstan
- New Opportunities for "The Rock"?

New Beginnings

As we move through this season of Advent, there is appropriate anticipation throughout the Parish. Not just for the renewal of faith that Christmas brings but also for the new opportunities and initiatives that face us in the coming year.

The new Team Vicar, Jo Wetherall, joins us in February. Huw and Jane and their family are moving to the new Rectory in early December.

There is a new sense of purpose and excitement about our activity groups and working parties that seems set to energise the Parish... Read how YOU can enjoy some of these "New Beginnings" on Page Three – The Editor

The View from Here...

Christmas is nearly upon us once more, and with the Christmas story comes the fantastic opportunity to reach out to the wider community and communicate something about the love of God. But whose task is it to do the reaching out? Is it you or the clergy?

When I came to the parish six years ago there were three full time priests, and we had a full time NSM priest in Janet Ridgway, and Martin Macdonald had just finished his diaconal year and had been ordained priest. Since then: we have been cut from three full time posts (and in the last year have only had one because of successive vacancies); Janet has retired (but is as busy as ever as Diocesan Mothers' Union Vice-President); and Martin is off up North. Fortunately Bill, Ian and Jane have continued to volunteer their services so we can maintain

our communion services and we are richly blessed by the lay readers and other ministers in the parish who continue to help provide the other services and to preach. However this reduction in clerical staff does refocus the question of what is the church. For many we are locked in a traditional mindset of:

Church = Building + Priest + Sunday Service

If you take this model, not much reaching out will be done this Christmas and our Sunday Services will slowly dwindle. If however we see:

Church = community + faith + action

then we begin to understand that the major task of the church is to enable all people to exercise their Christian vocations and discipleships. The church is the whole community of faith in action... (Continued on Page Two)

Tring Team Times is the magazine for all the Parish. If you know anyone who'd like to receive a personal copy, please let the circulation editors know.

The Rock - PLUS see page 7
a history and an opportunity
Competition news

A NEW SENSE OF PURPOSE IN THE PARISH

The View from Here (continued)

... We demonstrate our faith by the way in which we lead our daily lives and witness to our friends and neighbours. We also reach out by the way we welcome people at baptism, by the way we prepare people for marriage and by the way we care for them after funerals. We will reach out by learning more about prayer and theology, and being open in what our faith means to us. We will reach out by our engagement in social responsibility and mission. These are all things which we do together and are often far better done by the laity rather than the clergy. Above all we must do all of these things well.

We also need to look seriously at the pattern of worship across the parish. Whilst it remains absolutely vital to keep all of our churches open (especially in the light of post office and shop closures) we have to ask if we need a weekly service at all of them. In particular this discussion is happening at St Cross and All Saints.

The congregation at St Cross have decided that they will be better served by having one 10 am service each month and one 6.30 pm service each month. BUT this doesn't mean we are pulling back from our commitment here. It is a reflection that for many people regular worship is now monthly rather than weekly and it can be dispiriting to find yourself worshipping in a group of three or four people only. Also by reducing our Sunday commitment we are also able to direct energy and resources (including the time of organists, sidesmen and wardens) into midweek services. National statistics show that most church growth is in the informal services such as Toddler Worship and services connected to midweek coffee mornings.

It will be wonderful to welcome Jo to the ministry team and to have another priest in the parish. However it will be even better to be part of a church in which the whole community of faith puts its faith into action.

Huw Bellis



Welcome to Joanne Wetherall

Earlier this year we advertised for a new Team Vicar and the outstanding candidate was Jo Wetherall. Currently Jo is an NSM Curate and Family Liaison Minister at St Peter and St Paul's, Godalming. Before ordination Jo worked in early years education in a variety of settings: hospital; social service family centre; day care and schools. She has also worked as a Resettlement Worker in a hostel for vulnerable single women. She is married to Simon and they have two daughters.

Jo is going to bring a lot to our parish. She has an interest in the relationship between the Gospel and social action, in the connection between art and prayer/theological reflection, and working with families to make the church relevant and accessible to them. We are looking forward to Jo being with us. She will live in Aldbury but work across the whole parish and she is going to lead our Spiritual Growth Group.

Jo will be licensed by the Rt Revd Christopher Foster on Sunday 1st February at 3pm at St Peter and St Paul, Tring. Please try and come to this important event in the life of our church. Jo will then be visiting each of the districts and leading worship in each of the churches which will give you an opportunity to get to know her.

This is her intended schedule for each of the five churches:

- All Saints (10 am service) - 8th March
- All Saints (6 pm service) - 22nd February
- St John the Baptist (8 am service) - 1st March
- St John the Baptist (10 am service) - 8th February
- St John the Baptist (6 pm service) - 15th February
- St Mary's (8.15 am service) - 8th March
- St Mary's (3.30 pm service) - 15th February
- St Cross (10 am service) - 15th February
- St Cross (6.30 pm service) - 1st March
- St Peter & St Paul (8 am service) - 8th February
- St Peter & St Paul (10 am service) - 22nd February



Huw Bellis

Wedding fever - the father of the brides writes...

To misquote Oscar Wilde from 'The Importance of Being Ernest' - to lose one daughter may be considered unlucky. To lose two is careless! I would add, to lose two in one year is downright reckless... so it is fortunate I have not lost either of them, depending on the definition of lost, as even before they were married I was never sure where they were most of the time...

Having two daughters married in one year has, however, meant that my family has grown immensely. Thanks to all of you who joined us at Church and were praying for us and have supported our family over the years. It has been a tremendous time knowing we had so much love and support. - *Mike Watkin*

Who's Ready for Some Action?

One of the challenges Huw has raised with the PCC and the Parish as a whole is the challenge to get involved. Parishes traditionally operate on a committee basis - often with the same old soldiers doing the same old stuff year in, year out. It keeps things working but it can seem a little bit like a treadmill.

At a recent PCC meeting, the challenge to add some excitement and real action in the mix was laid down. Huw's vision is to bring the right talents and energies to bear on all the tasks that need to be carried out in Parish life. As we move towards the New Year, he wants as many new people as possible to get involved, join in and enjoy bringing some new vitality and energy to Parish life - in every aspect. Attached is a list of subjects that need action and support. We're thinking of a new name for committees - action groups sounds a bit more dynamic - and a better link between action and outcome as we work towards defined objectives and achieving measurable progress.

Areas where you can put your talents and interests to active use - and enjoy being more involved in our Community:

The pillars on which the church is built:

Mission & Social Responsibility; Pastoral Care; Spiritual Growth; Young People; Education; Fabric; Finance; Stewardship.

The function of each of these action groups is being reviewed and there's a real opportunity for new thinking and a new dynamic to enliven our community. If you'd like to be involved in any of these functions, contact your warden, Huw or any member of the ministry team.

As lay reader Mike Watkin once memorably said at a conference in Gloucester, "It was getting involved that got me involved. Until I was asked to do something, I didn't feel a full member of the community".

That same dynamic applies throughout Parish life and the truth is that the Parish belongs to its people. The church is not a place but a community and the more that members of that community work together, the more lively and involved it will be.

The panel below illustrates the current thinking on what creates a living dynamic church - a healthy one.

Seven Marks of a Healthy Church

- 1) Energised by faith rather than just keeping things going or trying to survive
- 2) Outward-looking focus with a 'whole life' rather than a 'church life' concern
- 3) Seeks to find out what God wants discerning the Spirit's leaning rather than trying to please everyone
- 4) Faces the cost of change and growth rather than resisting change and avoiding failure
- 5) Operates as a community rather than functioning as a club or religious organisation
- 6) Makes room for all being inclusive rather than exclusive
- 7) Does a few things and does them well focused rather than frenetic

For the full components of the 'healthcheck' see 'The Healthy Churches Handbook' - Robert Warren, Church House Publishing, 2004.

The challenge that faces all is to make sure our church measures up to this health check - *Grahame Senior*

The Perfect Christmas Gift...?

The book *Tring Days Out*, which was published this year, describes the character of our Parish and its area of outstanding natural beauty. It features leisure activities, walks and cycle rides, and offers the visitor and resident alike an excellent way of celebrating the benefits of being here. The photographs were taken by Colin Sturges, and for £5, a copy of the book together with a Christmas card featuring a view of the region can be sent to anyone in the UK.

It's a really good way of spreading the news about our delightful area and sending a timely greeting. If you'd like to take advantage of this offer, please send details of your intended recipient along with £5 per copy to The Editor, *Tring Team Times*.



Tring Parish Men's Society

This is the new name for the Tring Church Men's Society, chosen primarily to reflect the fact that we are in a Team Parish and welcome new members and visitors from all the churches in the Parish. However, the Society has been around for a long time, in fact since 1906. It was originally affiliated to the Church of England Men's Society but, since the demise of the national body in 1985, it has been an independent society.

By changing the name and giving greater publicity, we are seeking to raise the TPMS's profile in line with the agenda for church growth, including the objectives of building links with the community and strengthening all five districts of the Parish, as outlined by Huw Bellis in the August edition of the *Tring Team Times*. We aim to provide fellowship and mutual support for all men in the Parish through meetings with speakers, discussions, visits to places of interest and social events. Although the TPMS is Church based, membership is not restricted to Church members and all are most welcome to our meetings.

The 2008/09 programme contains a wide variety of topics of general interest, both Church-related and secular, ranging from a report on Palestine and Israel - Past and Present - to a behind the scenes visit to the Natural History Museum at Tring. We normally meet at 8pm on the first Wednesday of each month (except August and September), usually in the Parish Hall behind St Peter and St Paul.

Have a look at the What's On page of the *Tring Team Times*, the weekly pew sheet and the Parish website www.tringteamparish.org.uk for more details of our meetings.

We look forward to you joining us. - *Martin Wells*



NEWS FROM AFAR

The view from there (Up North, that is)

On 7th November two cars two people and one cat hared up the M1/ M62 to await the removers. A happy crowd of seven Yorkshire men (with one Aussie) carried all the furniture in as they had carried it out of Hall Park over the previous three days. The weather was unexpectedly dry and sunny which made the offloading so much easier, although the removers had had to do a recce the day before to make sure they could get up the 3/4 mile long track.



Victoria Macdonald

Victoria and Martin moved to West Yorkshire in early November and are offering open hospitality to all Parish members who would like to make the journey – The Editor

And what a view – across the valley, the bracken and the beech trees vied for orangeness. The fields that were cut for hay earlier in the year were bright green, while the rough pasture took on a more muted hue under the now grey moors.

We woke up on our first morning at Broad Head End feeling that this could not be true – we must only be on holiday. The clouds scudding across the sky show us that the wind is in the West – (Oh wild west wind, thou breath of Autumn's being!) but the change of light as we look into the distance and see the weather coming is as amazing and as fascinating as the single star that we saw last night rising over the hill opposite.

That first night our fingers were sore with unwrapping but with the rugs down and the beds made up, the bread maker on and the cat fed, we are glad that the house is built on rock as we heard the wind wuthering and the rain lashing the windows.

Our Friends in the North

Ah, yes, the North: land of the fish and chip eaters; coal miners and people who have to bathe in a tin contraption in front of the fire. A backward sort of place; by common consent an area best avoided at all costs since William the Conqueror went harrowing in the general vicinity circa 1069, although a visit to the Lake District became permissible once Wordsworth and Co got onto the subject.

About two weeks ago one of my Southern-born work colleagues was complaining bitterly about Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which she had been forced to visit the previous day. Totally oblivious to the amazing Georgian architecture which characterises the centre of the city she focused on the strength of a sudden gust of wind which had blown a lock of her hair onto her mouth and ruined her lipstick! Her train had passed through Durham, however, and she was very impressed with the impressive and dominating position occupied by the jail, which she believed she had managed to spot from the train window. We eventually worked out she was talking about the Castle, formerly the home of the Prince Bishops of Durham and now University College. And no, the lady concerned is neither stupid nor particularly ill-educated. She has a degree and her job is to assist in the formulation of government policy (no comment). The fact that the train network on which she travelled - not to mention the tube network she relies on every working day of her life - would not exist without the input of a certain George Stephenson Esquire (born in Wylam, Northumberland) has totally passed her by.

Yes, the North. A truly backward place. Next to "Durham Jail", there is, of course, Durham Cathedral, one of the most magnificent buildings in the country – although probably built by local craftsmen, rather than imports from the Beautiful South. The Galilee Chapel is the last resting place of the Venerable Bede, recognised as the Father of English History for his Ecclesiastical history of the English People and who probably never went more than a few miles from his monastery in Monkwearmouth in his entire life, barring the odd trip to its sister institution in Jarrow.

Actually, I normally view the ignorance of my esteemed colleagues with equanimity. After all, the greatest charm of the North is that it is untamed and largely unspoilt. Holy Island (that's what those of us in the know call Lindisfarne, cradle of English Christianity) is quite busy enough at low tide without a vast influx of tourists seeking enlightenment or, failing that, a genuine piece of pseudo-Celtic tat allegedly inspired by the Lindisfarne Gospels or possibly by that well-known King about the UK, Arthur of the Britons. (Incidentally, and nothing whatsoever to do with the subject of this polemic: have you ever wondered how Arthur managed to live in so many places at once – Tintagel in Cornwall, Cadbury Castle in Dorset, Glastonbury, various bits of Wales and even Scotland?).

I am also not so blinded by regional pride that I would claim that the North has the best of everything. It is patently obvious that the gardens at Belsay Hall, charming as they are, are not in the same league as those of, for example, Blenheim or Stowe. But then the gardens at both Blenheim and Stowe do owe a certain amount to one Capability Brown (born Kirkharle, Northumberland).

So come on, Peoples of the South. I'm not wild on a few areas of London. For example, after receiving a few unwanted attentions from a hoodie I don't particularly like West Norwood, but I did go there before I made my mind up. Decide you dislike the North of England if you must, but at least make an informed decision.

Liz Wood



It weren't half hot, sis...

Upon arrival back home in dear old Blighty, I found myself confronted by an email from my sister on Facebook. This email was simply a series of questions about the trip to Kyrgyzstan that I had returned from. I found the choice of questions very interesting and my responses took some degree of thought, but here it is: the questions and answers that sum up my visit to Kyrgyzstan.

Q: What was the most disgusting thing you ate?

A: *There wasn't anything disgusting as such (much to my disappointment after looking forward to sheep's eyes), but on my first day I had a rabbit pizza which was very nice, but interesting. The meat in the stew on the second day was a bit too tough, chewy and not great, though.*

Q: What was the most delicious thing you ate?

A: *The most delicious thing was probably the menthe, which is a bit like giant ravioli packets with spices and apparently horse meat in them.*

Q: What was the most disgusting thing you did?

A: *I fell ill and got seriously bad diarrhoea, so using a hole in the ground toilet was not great during that time.*

Q: What was the best thing you did?

A: *Socialising in Russian with the locals and translating menus etc. I thoroughly enjoyed improving my Russian and learning new things.*

Q: What were the people like and how hot was it?

A: *The people were friendly, kind and mostly happy. A: 30-35 degrees in the shade.*

Q: What did you build and was it difficult?

A: *I took part in rendering two walls, building four ceilings and four floors, then did some sanding on the door and window frames at the end. As a team we did everything from mixing the cement, sanding, cutting down boards and noggins, then sanding and painting the window frames and doors. Some of it was tricky, some of it was hard, but almost all of it was fun. The hardest parts were mixing the cement by hand in the sun and cutting the 8' or so long boards by hand.*

Q: What was the most interesting thing you learnt / saw / did?

A: *Possibly learning about the local history and legends. I found a lot of the cultural things and sayings interesting. Such as, "It is better for your stomach to explode than leave food on your plate" and "If you don't drink tea, where does your strength come from?".*

Q: What was the landscape like out there?

A: *Desolate, dry wastelands mixed with snow-capped Himalayas and a huge lake 182 km long and 62 km wide. IT WAS AMAZING*

Henry Nash



The Pilgrim's Way: Didier Who?

Sometimes it's sheer panic, other occasions its incredulity, but often it's a smile that greets me when I tell someone that I am training for ministry in the Church of England. I was amazed at the genuine welcome and joy with which people from the Tring Team met this news.

For it was just over four years ago that I first visited St Peter & St Paul, having moved here from my flat in Westminster. I moved to Tring because my girlfriend, Kathryn, comes from Leighton Buzzard and works in Great Brickhill. I had spent a year working in a church as a Pastoral Assistant; it was an interesting and busy job which I used to try and work out whether and how God was calling me to serve Him. It helped me to discern that I should offer myself for ministry. Fortunately, the Church agreed and in September 2006 I began training.

I am studying part time with the Eastern Region Ministry Course (the same one as Jane Nash) and have just started my third year. It's a part time course, and I continue to work full time as a lawyer. Why do I work and train? Well I firmly believe that Christian witness and opportunities to minister extend to all walks of life including, and especially, our working lives. Needless to say my days can be very busy and so you must forgive me if I look harassed – it will normally mean I have an essay due and am desperately behind.

Now that I am training, I also lead services and preach around the parish but I can always be found every Sunday, together with Angus and Debs Munday, at All Saints in Long Marston where we lead Evening Prayer in the Celtic Tradition at 6pm. It is a short, simple service by candlelight – and is a great way to end the day. So apart from training for ministry and my work, I have a great group of friends who, although not church goers themselves, take a keen interest in what I am doing. I prefer playing to watching sport. Having said that, this photo is of me at the Olympics this year in Hong Kong where I was lucky enough to see some of the equestrian events. I particularly enjoy racquet sports and like riding around the area on my ridiculously heavy mountain bike which Huw takes great delight in teasing me about. I love skiing and surfing.

Oh and the strange name? I was born in Switzerland but have lived in England for all my life. I grew up in Eastbourne and so in the summer I really miss the sea (not that we can claim to have had much of a summer this year). Although it is not near the sea, I think this is a beautiful area and the people of Tring and the surrounding villages are really friendly. What's great is that I am still discovering new things and new people. – *Didier Jaquet*



'Who's Who' and 'What's On'

Important reference pages to cut out and keep by the phone

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What's On

Date	Event and Venue	Time
Sun 30th Nov	St Peter and St Paul, Tring. Christingle Service.	3pm
Mon 1st Dec	St Mary's, Puttenham. DCC meeting.	8pm.
Tues 2nd Dec	St Peter and St Paul, Tring, Kyrgyzstan 2009 Meeting.	8pm.
Wed 3rd Dec	Parish Hall, Tring. Men's Society meeting. Liz Bendall talking about Tudor Palaces.	8pm
Sun 7th Dec	St John the Baptist, Aldbury. Christingle Service.	3pm.
Wed 10th Dec	Parish Hall, Tring. St Peter and St Paul DCC meeting.	8pm
Sat 13th Dec	All Saints, Long Marston. Christmas Crafts.	
Sun 14th Dec	Tring School. Christmas concert. Christmas favourites including wine and mince pies.	2.30pm
	St Peter and St Paul, Tring. Team Parish Christmas Play, "Joe Carpenter and Son". Carole Wells on 01442 828593.	3pm
Thurs 18th Dec	Tring Parish Church. Carol service.	8pm
Fri 19th Dec	CTT. Pub carols in Tring.	7pm-9pm
Sat 20th Dec	St Peter and St Paul, Tring. Tring Choral Society Concert.	7.30pm
Sun 21st Dec	St Peter and St Paul, Tring. Lessons and Carols.	6.30pm
Sun 21st Dec	St John the Baptist, Aldbury. Lessons and Carols.	6.30pm
Wed 7th Jan	All Saints, Long Marston. DCC meeting.	8pm
Mon 12th Jan	St Cross, Wilstone. DCC meeting.	7pm
Wed 14th Jan	Parish Hall, Tring. St Peter and St Paul DCC meeting.	8pm
Thurs 15th Jan	Men's Society New Year Lunch at the Duck Inn, Aston Clinton.	12noon
Thurs 15th Jan	St John the Baptist, Aldbury. DCC Full Meeting.	8pm
Sat 17th Jan	St Peter and St Paul, Tring. Iain Rennie concert.	7.30pm
Wed 21st Jan	Parish Hall, Tring. PCC meeting	8pm
Wed 28th Jan	Ministers and Wardens Meeting. The New Rectory, Tring.	8pm
Sat 31st Jan	Confirmation Service at St Albans Abbey.	
Sun 1st Feb	St Peter and St Paul, Tring. Licensing of Revd Joanne Wetherall as Tring Team Vicar.	3pm
Wed 4th Feb	Parish Hall, Tring. Men's Society meeting. Bill George talking about Flight Memories	8pm
Thurs 12th Feb	St John the Baptist, Aldbury. DCC Discussion Meeting.	8pm
Wed 18th Feb	Ash Wednesday.	
Sat 21st Feb	Team Sausages and Pancakes. Venue TBC	12noon
Wed 28th Feb	Ministers and Wardens Meeting. The New Rectory, Tring.	8pm
Wed 4th March	All Saints, Long Marston. DCC Meeting.	8pm
Wed 4th March	Parish Hall, Tring. Men's Society meeting. AGM and Robert Ford talking about Bowen Technique Therapy.	8pm
Wed 11th March	Parish Hall, Tring. St Peter and St Paul DCC meeting.	8pm
Thurs 12th March	St John the Baptist, Aldbury. DCC Financial Meeting.	8pm
Thurs 19th March	Parish Hall, Tring. PCC meeting.	8pm
Mon 23rd March	St Cross, Wilstone. District Church Meeting.	7pm
Mon 23rd March	St Mary's, Puttenham. ADCM.	8pm
Sun 29th March	All Saints, Long Marston. Annual District Church Meeting.	11am
Mon 30th March	St Cross, Wilstone. Annual District Church Meeting.	7pm
Wed 1st April	Parish Hall, Tring. Men's Society meeting. Revd Bill Carpenter talking about Israel - Past and Present.	8pm
Thurs 2nd April	St John the Baptist, Aldbury. Annual District Church Meeting.	8pm
Wed 22nd April	St Peter and St Paul, Tring. Annual District Church Meeting.	8pm
Wed 29th April	Parish Hall, Tring. Annual Parochial Church Meeting.	8pm
Wed 6th May	Parish Hall, Tring. Men's Society meeting. Visit to the Natural History Museum Laboratory. Meet at the Zebra Café.	4pm
Fri 8th May	Parish Hall, Tring. Friends of Tring Church Heritage Annual General Meeting.	8pm

Competition One Winner - The Prayer Bridge

The competition winner for spotting the location was Philip Owens, who correctly identified the south end gate of 'the prayer bridge' on the Ridgeway where it crosses the A41.



Competition Two Winner - A Dear Friend Recalled

The mystery competition from edition 21 fooled no one. We had a record entry recognising the lady in the helmet as Gillian Miller. The winning caption was "Gillian Miller trialling to be a stunt lady" from Libby McKerrow. Tragically, Gillian died on 19th October at the shockingly young age of 52 after a life lived richly and fully, and her sense of fun and adventure is hugely missed (see page 9).

A bottle of fine wine goes to each winner - *The Editor*



The Rock

A history of rejection and violence - what will be its future?

This is the rock that lost its useful place in the church wall and was then picked up and thrown high into the air. With amazing force it penetrated St Peter & St Paul's clerestory windows, breaking two panes and destroying the lead work before landing on the sound system cabinet far below.

What will happen to it next? - see page 12



NEW COMPETITION



What's being said here? a bottle of fine wine for the best caption... Answers on a postcard to the Editor, please.

CELEBRATING DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE PARISH

Wonderful Wilstone

Where is Hall Mead? Ten Groves? Wick Mead Furlong? You don't know? Nor did I, until very recently. By standing on the brow of Little Tring Road, above the line of the Wendover Arm Canal, it is possible to gaze over a vast expanse of open countryside, dotted with farms and villages, and displaying all the wonders of God's Creation – and right in the middle of this lovely vista is Wilstone.

On Friday 17 October local photographer, John Painter, presented a "Picture Show of Wilstone in the Twenty First Century" at the village hall. Travelling from one end of the village to the other, the photographs showcased the amazing range of architecture present in one small village, much of it from the nineteenth century. The houses and cottages, farms and flats all meld into one cohesive whole, linked by some lovely gardens, and lots of natural beauty in the mature trees and farmland. The photographs spanned several years, and illustrated the pattern of life through the year, proving that some things never change. The annual visit of the Whitchurch Morris Men, to dance outside the Half Moon on a Sunday morning in May; the village fete, going from strength to strength and attracting ever increasing numbers of visitors; the observance of Remembrance Sunday; and the Easter Egg Hunt and Fun Day at St Cross. And all the other occasions which bring the village together – cream teas, dances, jumble sales, cubs, brownies and beavers – served to illustrate the strong sense of community which is so prevalent in Wilstone. Sadly, along with its neighbour, Long Marston, the village has lost its Post Office and Shop, a major point of support and service for many people. But there is a farm in the village, and the farm has a shop; an excellent source of local produce all year round. The farm could even claim a royal connection – Meads supply beef to



Waitrose, and Waitrose hold a royal warrant - albeit for groceries!!

The church in Wilstone, St Cross, probably has the smallest congregation in the Tring Team, but possibly the largest group of Friends, whose support allows it to be maintained in style. St Cross has a reputation for hospitality especially on a Tuesday morning when coffee and cakes attract many people from the village and farther afield. The building is sound, clean (dusted and polished!) and the light pouring through the pastel diamond glass in the big windows reflects on the flowers on the altar. The church grounds are well maintained, and all this work comes from voluntary effort, much of it from Friends.

So, back to the original question - where are Hall Mead, Ten Groves and Wick Mead Furlong? If you approach Wilstone from Little Tring, pass Meads Farm Shop, and turn right into the village, the first turning on the left is Chapel End Lane. At the end of the lane, a footpath will take you past Ten Groves and Wick Mead Furlong and into Hall Mead, beautiful fields lined with mature trees, including some Black Poplars, a rare and protected species found in the locality of the rural parish. John Painter's photographs followed this footpath, and others, and showed just what glorious countryside surrounds Wilstone. John's pictures, spanning January to December, sunrise to sunset, provided overwhelming evidence of the beautiful landscape which makes up this part of the Tring Team parish, and of the character (human and architectural!) which is uniquely Wilstone.



So, next time the sun shines, come down to the village, have a coffee at Meads Farm Shop, walk around the village, across the fields, along the canal, and back to the Half Moon (for an excellent lunch), and enjoy this green and pleasant land.

Alison Cockerill

An Administrative Angle

I always think of administration as bit like a swan, serene above water but paddling like mad to keep afloat! By this I mean that the public see the finished article, but they don't see the struggle to get everything onto the page in the right order, check the spellings and make sure all the information is correct. But that's the easy bit. There is also the problem of trying to organise people to prepare ahead; you try talking to people about Christmas when they are looking forward to their summer holidays or discussing Easter while there are still turkey sandwiches on the table! I should explain, I took on the role of Parish Administrator with some trepidation about six months ago, knowing about the weekly pewsheets, but not knowing what else was involved. Ten years as PA to the Chairman of 6 companies at least prepared me for the unexpected, but that was before Dan was born and he is now nearly nine! Fortunately, the Parish have been gentle with me and I have gradually taken on additional tasks as and when they arise, and I believe this will continue to happen.

With an administrative background, taking on this role seemed the ideal way for me to 'give something back' and with my children growing up rapidly, I knew I couldn't sit at home doing nothing for much longer. There is also another reason for taking on the role, you could call it keeping it in the family, as my mother did the same work when I was young. In talking to her about it, it became apparent just how much has changed and how far technology has moved on. For her the work involved a typewriter and a hand-turned copier known as a Gestetner whereas now we have e-mails, PDF's and a superfast copier called a Risograph. However, essentially the work remains the same – organising information so that people know what is going on, when.

Paperwork is sometimes seen as dull, repetitive work, but even in this supposedly paperless world, it still continues to be the method by which many people like to be kept informed. It provides a permanent record that everybody can take with them and pass on to others. Administration is about planning and preparation to ensure that things happen when they should in the way people expect. Maybe I'm odd, but for me organising a filing system or making a list is fun! I think I've found my perfect job! – **Sally Smith**



Update on the RE Initiative



Did you miss it – the Stuart Hallam morning? It was excellent, you really should have been there. This was the launch of the RE Initiative community events. Stuart has been in Afghanistan with 40 Commando where they spent seven months in Helmand province with Stuart as their chaplain. Stuart took us through the training he had to do to earn his green beret. He was put through a gruelling course which included a 30 mile run fully equipped. The video he showed left us in no doubt as to how hard this training was especially for a chaplain doing the course with men twenty years younger than him. Every one present applauded when the treasured green beret was finally awarded to him. As chaplain Stuart wanted to fully identify with the ordinary soldier and did not hold back when they asked him to go on patrol with them. He showed us photographs of the patrols and of the local area and local people. It was scary on patrol, that fear of the unknown – what was round the next corner? Had any mines been laid? Then Stuart shared four days from his diary; snapshots and poignant memories. There was the challenge of putting on a Christmas service which one commander did not support but which ran and was enjoyed by many of the soldiers. Then there was JT, Stuart got to know him as a good friend and an officer with deep faith. The unit managed to go five months without losing anyone, then came that day in February when a mine hit a patrol. One soldier dead and JT badly injured. Stuart stayed with JT in hospital until nothing more could be done and then had to tell the men of his unit about their loss.

Stuart's presentation was followed by four discussion groups. Huw Bellis guided his group to look at "Personal religious belief in the face of battlefield realities", Mike Watkin's group discussed "Love thy neighbour – to what extent is the enemy the neighbour?" Duncan Fudge looked at Winning hearts and minds rather than just capturing territory, and Dr Caroline Ellwood considered "How far is religion a cause of war?" In the brief feedback session following it became apparent how much more we need to think about these complex issues in order to establish a personal stance on war. It also was apparent how little we knew about the background to the war in Afghanistan – could you justify a soldier why he was being sent out there?

Stuart's compassion as a chaplain was fully evident throughout the morning. The work done by the troops in the province was not only in patrolling the area but also included getting to know the local people and being there to further goodwill. While they were in Helmand the unit helped build a school which now educates girls as well as boys – a positive step forward. War is no short term solution to a problem, but a long term commitment to establishing a lasting peace. Our thanks are due to Stuart for giving us an excellent morning and guiding us into thinking more deeply about "War and God". By the time you read this, you will have missed or may have attended the lecture by Professor Morna Hooker on Saint Mark's Gospel. We hope that those who went feel enriched to study our Gospel readings for the coming year.

Look out for an exciting RE Mastermind on 11th March, and another discussion session about "Evil and Suffering" on 16th May; with a wonderful Music Event being planned for the Autumn term. Be there!

Jill Smith



What I want for Christmas

World peace. An end to poverty. To work with deprived children and endangered animals... (oh, forgive me. This is my acceptance speech for the Miss World crown – well a girl can dream can't she?) But if we were to have a genie pop out of our Christmas lamp who of you wouldn't have one of those top their wish list? Those are massive wishes, on a World Wide scale. Too enormous for one person to tackle alone (although some have tried and made great in-roads... Mandela, Mother Theresa, Kofi Annan, Bill Oddie... to name just a few). But the majority of us are not born into the larger crusade. I am not able to mount campaigns, stand on picket lines, tie myself to trees or put on a batman outfit and scale the houses of parliament (the kids would love to see me try though). My efforts have to be closer to home. So pull the telephoto lens in closer to a local level. I wish to preserve our "green belt". I can and will protest against the development of the canal side field on the Icknield Way. I wish to see Tring remain a vibrant and thriving small market town. So I will continue to support our local shops and tradespeople. I wish to see a place established for our teenagers to hang out in. So I have become involved in the youth project (due to start soon at the Temperance Hall) to provide a much needed after school drop in centre for our teenage population – a slightly self serving cause, given that my three will be teenagers within the next 10 years.

I still think that the focus needs adjusting one more time to bring it closer to a personal level. So on my Christmas Wish List I would ask for a potion giving life long patience and understanding. I am so short of these at times. Linked intrinsically to this is my final wish for an out and out cure for old age (and all that it brings with it). Back in January we moved my parents into our garage (for those who don't know you'll be relieved to learn that we don't park the car there any longer!). I am now exposed daily to the ravages of the ageing process. I would dearly love to retain the people who are my parents in the form that I know and love. But Old Age has other plans. The challenges of looking after two frail and needy people changes the dynamics of the parent/daughter relationship somewhat. Their reliance on me is almost comparable with that of my own children. Their gratitude for the little things I am able, and happy, to do for them is overwhelming. I had always assumed that the old adage "you reap what you sow" was meant, in some way, as a warning against falling foul of something. Only now, since the tables have turned on the relationship with my parents, where I find myself as their carer, has the true essence of that saying revealed itself to me. My parents cared, nurtured, loved and provided for us without fail or question. I feel it is time for them now to reap the rewards of their hard work and sit back and allow me to give something back to them. It is my pleasure to make their twilight years comfortable and secure. However I really need some of that aforementioned potion sometimes!



Libby McKerrow

MEMORIES AND HOPES

Tring Team trip on paddle steamer Waverley Saturday, 11th October 2008

In October 2007, my wife Kate and I enjoyed a trip with the engineering department of the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre on the Paddle Steamer Waverley along the Thames. Gillian Miller listened to my enthusiastic description of an enjoyable day out and the idea for another outing on the Waverley, this time organised by us, was formed.

Saturday morning around 7.30 am, and there was a buzz of excitement at the bus stop as 40 intrepid travellers met up to await the coach which would take us to the Tower (Millennium) Pier in London to join the world's last sea-going Paddle Steamer, Waverley, for a cruise around the Thames Estuary. Gillian Miller had arrived with her husband Gerry and some name badges that he had made for us as "Producer" and "Executive Producer". There was a great sense of anticipation as the weather forecast promised a sunny day, with gentle wind.

Traffic was light, and very soon we were following the route to "the City". In no time we arrived at the Tower of London, and managed to get everyone together to distribute the tickets for the ship.

As we walked around the corner we saw the red, white and black funnels of the Waverley, with wisps of smoke or steam at the tops. The ramp up to the pier took us alongside Waverley, allowing us to see the paddles rotating slowly, presumably to help keep station against the flow of the river. The gang plank was stowed and the hawsers cast off and with a blast of the steam hooper on the funnel, we were away from the pier. With the aid of a tugboat we turned toward Tower Bridge, which was opening to let us through, and cheered as we passed through the bridge.

We then steamed east, enjoying views of Canary Wharf, the O2 Stadium and passing through the Thames Flood Barrier, and onward, beneath the QE 2 Bridge (where the M25 crosses the river at Dartford). By now the early mist had gone and we enjoyed the sunshine, as we steamed on toward Tilbury.

There was an informative commentary from the ship's bridge as we passed the tops of ventilation shafts for Dartford tunnel and then Thames Gateway container port, and some nautical frivolity as our captain spotted MV "Asperity", which he had captained in the past, and saluted with a number of blasts on the hooper, but not as many as 7 (which is the signal for abandon ship!).

We then headed out into the Estuary, towards Southend Pier to collect 400 steam enthusiasts from the Midlands. This seemed an ideal time to savour the delights of the on board catering. With a toot of the hooper Waverley steamed back into the river before starting the turn towards the North Kent coast and the sandbanks off Whitstable, and the Maunsell forts on Shivering Sands and Rough Sands. We also got good views of the wind powered electricity generators in this area, before circling Knock John Fort, which can be seen on the horizon from the seafront at Margate.

We then turned westward, to head home, Waverley settling into a good pace, and riding very smoothly, demonstrating the benefit of being propelled by paddles either side of the hull. The engineer in me took me to the exceptionally clean (grease lubricated) engine room to examine the valve gear in greater detail. It was almost hypnotic watching the smooth motion of the connecting rods, enlivened by another piece of nautical frivolity, a small toy dolphin "riding the waves" atop the connecting rod.

Whilst most passengers retired to the restaurant for supper, a few hardy souls stayed on deck. We passed the mouth of the Medway and the wreck of the Liberty Ship "Richard Montgomery" which sank in WW2 and is still full of unexploded munitions and as the sun set in the west, we could see the lights of aircraft on the approach to London City Airport. By the time we approached Tilbury it was dark, and the lights of London dominated the skyline. Back on the river the approach to the Flood Barrier was signalled by the red and green navigation lights. The lights of Canary Wharf beckoned and at this point we saw the Meridian laser at Greenwich, its green beam marking where we moved back from East to West.

The trip was nearly over and Gillian and Gerry joined Kate and myself, Jenny Scholes and her friend Carol in one of the lounges. Kate had organised a little surprise for Gillian and I, presenting us each with a print of the picture from the front cover of a recent edition of The People's Friend, featuring Waverley in her home waters at Glasgow.

I must say a Big Thank You to (the late) Gillian Miller who helped me to organise the trip, and, naturally and brilliantly, assumed the role of treasurer. I had planned to hand this write-up over to Gillian to add her perspective, but tragically, that was not to be. I can't conclude without saying thanks to Gerry Miller, who rounded up our "lost sheep" so that we could start our coach journey home, and organised the drop off points along the High Street. Naturally our thoughts are with him at this sad time. Overall, the feedback on the trip has been very positive and Gillian told me that the coach driver said to her "what a well organised trip it was". I can't pay a greater tribute to a greatly-missed friend than that.

Mike Stratford

The Mother's Union moves forward!

At the end of this year, Janet Ridgway relinquishes the reins as branch leader of Tring Team Mothers' Union after a warm and eventful term. Janet is continuing her role as Diocesan MU Vice-President. The hallmark of the MU in Tring Team has always been a warm and inclusive atmosphere at all meetings and events. You don't have to be a member to attend them, and you will always be very welcome if you do. Indeed you don't even have to be a mother to join! The branch is flourishing with fifty active members and two well-attended meetings every month on the first Thursday afternoon and the third Thursday evening. Jill Smith is taking over as leader in January adding this important role to her work as governor of Tring School and Community Administrator for the Tring School Campus RE Initiative. If you would like to join in any of the activities you will find them a very friendly group at the warm heart of our church community. Contact Jill Smith on 01442 825644 for all information.

We wish her great joy in her new role – *The Editor*



The Value of our Village Schools

As you know, much of my time is spent with young children and their parents and one of their concerns is always education. We are incredibly fortunate in this area as there are so many good schools around with committed staff and governors working hard to ensure that they continue to improve. The village schools are ones that I know well, since our children started their education in Aldbury, and I am a governor and the church link for Long Marston, and both of course are Church of England schools. They engender much loyalty among the pupils and their parents, and there are many who have been glad to send their children to the same primary school that they attended.

Both those schools will see changes over this year as both say goodbye to long serving Headteachers: Doreen Meek of Aldbury will retire this December, and Peter Dickinson of Long Marston will be moving away from the area next summer to start a new stage of life. We owe them both an enormous debt of gratitude as teaching is a difficult job these days, and being a headteacher is even more difficult. People still believe that teachers only work half the year (just as they seem to believe that clergy only work one day a week – take it from me that neither is the case) but one does not need to be around a school for long to realise how much time goes into preparation both in term time and the holidays, and how much of themselves they put into their work. The influence of a teacher is enormous – think of the ones you still remember – and it seems very important that we show our thanks to Mrs Meek and Mr Dickinson.

Both have shown great commitment to children and staff; both have worked extremely hard; both have brought their own personalities to the job; and both have both worked with the system, and stood up to it when they felt it was not providing the best for the children. They have seen many changes, although both, I think, feel that is more than enough changes by now. I know that current and past pupils and parents will remember them with much affection and gratitude and wish them both and their families much joy in the years ahead (and may they at long last enjoy going on holiday in term time!). Seeing our children start formal education and talking to parents with children at similar stages has opened my eyes to many things. Firstly how much the system has changed (I still have to add on 6 – or is it 5 – when people talk about year 6 or year 9); and secondly how a worrying number of parents seem to see school and teachers as opponents rather than allies engaged in the same task. It is also concerning how many seem to want changes that help their child only rather than the whole school community, not to mention those for whom success means being to read and write at the age of 4. It was very telling when a reception class teacher said "what we really need them to do when they start school is to be able to sit still and listen, to get themselves dressed, and to go to the loo by themselves."

Education is hugely important, and we forget how much of a gift it is. We also view it too narrowly – our children will never get everything they need from school, but it can teach them how to enjoy learning and to recognise and use their gifts and those of others. It can give them good friends and valuable role models, and it can give them an understanding of the world and of their place in it. For all these things we give thanks to Mrs Meek and Mr Dickinson and all the staff, and may we continue to support our schools and to pray for them.

Jane Banister



A Life Remembered

Gillian Miller died on 19th October 2008 quietly at home. Having been given a short time to live at birth due to a congenital heart condition, she lived a full, rich and adventurous life for 52 years. She and Gerry moved to Tring in 1990 and lived here very happily. The fact that Gillian always walked slowly and rested often meant that she always had time to talk to people. She was a great friend to many, a keen student of the scriptures and a lover of excitement and adventure. Her involvement in All Age Worship services was very important to her and this is a favourite poem which she read more than once at these services. It was read at the Service of Celebration of her life. It sums up her gentle, thoughtful and kind approach to Christian life perfectly. It is based on a fragment of Homer:

“Let me live in my house by the side of the road,
Where the race of men go by.
They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they are strong,
Wise and foolish - so am I.
Then why should I sit in the scomer's seat or hurl the cynic's ban?
Let me live in my house by the side of the road and be a friend to man.”

SAMUEL WALTER FOSS

This is what her mother wrote in a thank you letter to the Parish: "It gave me great comfort to know that Gillian had found kindred spirits in the church... I have been overwhelmed by the love and kindness shown to me since Gillian's death which is surely a reflection on her popularity. I am able to draw great comfort from this." – *The Editor*