

# Newsletter of the Smaller Churches in the Thames Valley Circuit

November – December 2013

## Minister's Letter

### A SURVIVAL KIT

There was I. Wandering around southern England one Sunday afternoon during the sabbatical, vaguely heading for home, but still wondering when as well as where Christians worshipped in this rural backwater of Christendom, when I came upon a small village church which people seemed to be walking into, instead of out of.

I stopped. I parked. I went to worship.

Slightly worrying when the person at the door having just come straight from another service, I worrying still, when, having told her who I was and got something for you!" Visions of being mistaken missionary among the tribes of Berkshire, or, to a vast fort... She returned, carrying a tiny little confident that I was indeed the correct recipient. of work, you'll need this."



almost curtsied, until I remembered that, was still wearing a clerical collar. More where I came from, she then said, "Ooo, I've for a long lost nephew who went off to be a better still, the long-sought-for missing heir orange cloth bag. "This is for you," she said, "You'll need this. Sooner or later, in your line

I accepted her gift, went away, sat down, opened the bag, and discovered the following. I share them with you now.

1. A toothpick – to remind you to pick out the good qualities in others. (Ephesians 4: 29)
2. A rubber band – to remind you to be flexible, even when things don't go your way. With God as your guide, they will work out. (Proverbs 3: 5 & 6)
3. A plaster – to remind you that hurt feelings need healing. (Ephesians 4: 32)
4. A pencil – to help you to list all your blessings every day. (Matthew 6: 25 & 26)
5. A piece of chewing gum – to remind you to stick with God, then you can accomplish anything. (Ephesians 6: 10)
6. A tea bag – to help you relax and pray every day. (Philippians 4: 41)
7. A marble – for those moments when someone says you've lost yours! (No biblical reference to marbles as such.)

I smiled at her when I left. I asked her what she would give me next time I came, now that I had the little bag. "The pulpit," she said. Smart cookie, that. So, what do you give to strangers who come knocking at your church door?

God bless,

Gary.

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***The Thames Valley Circuit is committed to supporting its "smaller churches"***

*Although with comparatively few members, each of these churches is very active, and all are strengthened by working together. These newsletters tell of some of their exciting, on-going work.*

## News from the Churches

### BURNHAM

Have you ever considered how many references to 'thank you' there might be? No, please don't rush to Google now, oh, you were putting the kettle on, sorry. We were delighted to welcome the Chairman of the District (Rev John Hellyer), on Sunday morning, 13th October, and he took 'Thank you' as his theme. He gave us much to reflect on, including the suggestion that there might be times when 'thank you' is not an appropriate response.

It was a great pleasure to have John and his wife, Mary, among us. The congregation extended its usual warm and friendly welcome and we hope that John and Mary felt as much at home with us as we did with them. Our Young Church members lived up to their splendid reputation, appearing towards the end of the service in masks ... the reason for the masks was that the current theme for the young people is 'Treasure' and they were pirates. As usual, they accompanied the last hymn enthusiastically on a selection of percussion instruments. [Note to Burnham readers of this Newsletter: we have PLENTY of spare instruments!]



*Rev John Hellyer and Pirates*



*Part of Burnham's Prayer Station*

We participated in the 24 hour Prayer vigil at St. Andrew's, taking for our prayer station Ireland and The Gambia. It was quite a learning curve, but a very blessed one. We felt both moved and encouraged as we visited so many 'stations' around the world and this was underlined when we shared in the Sunday evening service and listened to Rev Conrad Hicks' invigorating message. Thank you everyone.

*The Well@Lent Rise* has moved smoothly into the Autumn season. It is a joy to see how so many hearts are encouraged and warmed by the fellowship and witness displayed on Wednesday mornings.

Getting up at 6 am for *Wake-Up Wednesday* is still not too challenging as the days are still quite mild, but I'm sure we'll soon be shivering. However, it is all so very worthwhile as we meet and talk with the school students waiting for the school buses. Please continue to pray for this outreach. Thank you.

Hilary Evans

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### **Editor's note / Contact**

My thanks to all contributors for this edition!

Stories, pictures, information for future editions will be much appreciated. Keep them coming!  
Anne Haggarty

## COOKHAM RISE

Autumn now appears to be with us and on 5<sup>th</sup> / 6<sup>th</sup> October we celebrated our Harvest Festival weekend with Harvest Supper on the Saturday, where a speaker from Water Aid came to talk to us about the charity's work, and with worship on the Sunday morning led by Connie Jeffery and Kathy Rickman on the theme "The Water of Life". Our latest Messy Church session on the parable of the sower on Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September was not that successful as it was only attended by the grandchildren of one church member! We obviously chose a bad weekend – although the children who came seemed to enjoy it and we made lovely bread rolls for tea. Our next Messy Church session will be on the afternoon of Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> December when we will have Messy Christmas – sounds like an opportunity for lots of glitter and glue! The church Carol Service will take place on Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> December, at 7.30, organised by the Ladies Circle.

The refurbishment of the worship area is continuing. As I write (at the beginning of October), all the pews have been reserved by people in the Cookhams or around the Circuit and the small pews have been unfixed from the floor and walls and will hopefully disappear soon. Then we will need to unfix the large pews and arrange for them to be removed too, leaving us with an empty space and a carpet that will need professionally cleaning. We expect to worship in the Wesley Hall for some weeks before chairs arrive. There was a small hiccup earlier when the person unfixing the small pews from the walls and floor discovered that the heating pipes which run along the walls were being supported only by the pews! A rather panicky phone call asking for lots of house-bricks remedied the situation temporarily! It does mean though that we are probably going to have to remove the old heating pipes and replace them with radiators and pipes of a smaller diameter – the sagging pipes rather forced our hand! Exciting times at Cookham Rise!



*Part of Cookham Rise's Prayer Station*

Church lunches continue each month on the first Sunday, and coffee mornings with cake stall on the third Saturday, raising money for a variety of good causes – we are always glad to see visitors from around the circuit. In addition we have decided to support the re-emerged Re:charge charity for six months until Easter 2014. Our Open the Book team continues to take Bible stories into Cookham Rise Primary School and this term is covering the adventures of St Paul: the children seem to enjoy what we do and are always keen to be involved if possible.

In September we studied John's first letter, which gave rise to much discussion, and for four weeks beginning on Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> November we will have our Advent Course, which will be a new York Course entitled 'Expecting Christ'. Even talking about Advent already seems to be wishing the year away, but Sainsbury's has had its Christmas puddings on display for a couple of weeks so I suppose in no time at all Christmas will be upon us!

Connie Jeffery

## **ETON WICK**

The third session of *Singing the Faith* held in our church on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September was a great success with representatives from many of the churches around the Circuit attending and enjoying singing new hymns and songs as well as some favourites. The roof was raised but fortunately suffered no lasting ill effects!

Harvest was a time of joy, with a large variety of produce filling our church. The Monday evening service and supper was a lively event, and together with the auction of the harvest produce, a total of £219 was raised for the Methodist Relief and Development Fund.

Members celebrated 127 years of witness in the chapel at their Church Anniversary Service on the morning of 13<sup>th</sup> October led by our minister Rev Sonia Hicks and the Ladies Club Anniversary was well attended in the evening, at a service led by Mrs Jill Baker.

Our first Pie and Praise evening of the church year on 15<sup>th</sup> October was an opportunity to get to know more about our newest church family. Nitu Harry, a paediatrician, talked about her life and work.

We have taken delivery of a new dual fuel cooker which will be a vital part of our kitchen equipment to keep visitors to our weekly lunch club happy! Part of the cost of this cooker came from a St Andrew's Church donation to us as one of the smaller churches. We are grateful to St Andrew's Church Council for this kind donation.



*Part of Eton Wick's Prayer Station at the Circuit's 24 hours of Prayer Day*

We were pleased to host the Circuit Healing Service on Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30 pm. This was the first time that Eton Wick has hosted this service in an evening, and we were delighted that it gave an opportunity for people who cannot attend in the daytime to share in this form of Worship.

New tenants moved into our cottage in October. We welcome Roger and Romana to their new home and hope they will be very happy in their new surroundings.

Our Christmas Celebrations will include our Carol and Mince Pie evening on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December from 7.15 pm. This annual event is a regular sell out! As well as carols and mince pies and other yummy refreshments there are always seasonal individual and group performances, witty monologues, accordion-accompanied singing and often a ministerial team masterpiece to make this a truly memorable occasion! Peter Morris is the ticketmaster, if you wish to reserve your seats for this event.

Followed by ... our Candlelight Carol Service at 6.30 pm on the evening of Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December with readings and carols telling the story of the birth of our Saviour, Jesus.

The 9.30 am service on 25<sup>th</sup> December gets the Christmas Day celebrations off to the best possible start. This service will be led by our minister Rev Sonia Hicks and all are welcome to share this moment of joy with us.

The Eton Wick membership wishes you a memorable Advent, a joyous Christmas, a happy New Year and God's blessing on you and your church.

Daphne Hogg

## **WOODLANDS PARK**

Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> September saw the Woodlands Community Events, comprising Woodlands Park Methodist Church, White Waltham C of E church, St. Mary's in Maidenhead and Housing solutions, hold a Super Saturday event on the green at Woodlands Park to mark the 2012 Olympics and saw people take part in the spirit of the games. These included a climbing wall, sumo suit wrestling, melon eating, Olympic torch making, mini tennis and cream teas ... enough to sink the Titanic! This was the fourth time an event had been held and the first one in September. 250 people came along to join in the fun. The Mayday mayhem event drew in a crowd of 500 people and while we were a little disappointed about the numbers this time, it was agreed that the people who did come along enjoyed it. With fewer people it meant that the younger children got to try the climbing wall and sumo suits, something they were a little shy of doing with lots of teenagers around in May. A big thank you to all our volunteers! Woodlands Park may be a small church but we all have big hearts.



*Open the Book* is still going strong, and long may it continue, due to our enthusiastic group of "youngsters" who give up their time to perform at Woodlands Park Primary School. Oscar winning performers all of them!

The last Sunday in September saw us celebrating Harvest Festival with Andrew leading the service and joining us for soup and cake afterwards. An odd combination you may think – but no one seems able to resist a cake after the soup (Andrew!). The money from the produce and the remainder of the produce was donated to Yedall Manor, a Christian drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre in Maidenhead.

So what next ... before we get to the Carol Service – it is a case of saving those toilet rolls again for the Crackers at the Woodlands Winter Wonderland Christmas event. Ho Ho Ho!

Linda Harrison

## COLNBROOK & POYLE UNITED CHURCH

Our October fellowship was a huge success with about thirty four people in attendance, including five friends from Old Windsor, and a further eleven friends from St Thomas' C of E Church in Colnbrook. The event started with a meal, prepared jointly by the ladies from St Thomas' and our own ladies.

The Anglicans prepared the main course – a delicious ploughman's lunch, and our ladies served up the sweets, or the puddings as we Colnbrook folk commonly call them. With trifle, apple crumble and custard, black forest Gateau and lemon cheese cake. YUMMY!!

When we had eaten our fill, Rev Margaret introduced us to Alan Smith who was to give us a presentation, on the work of the Methodist Relief and Development Fund (MRDF).

A slide show, a short film, and a talk about the marvellous work MRDF does around the world helping with finance where it is most needed. This is mostly in areas of extreme poverty, hunger, drought or disaster. If you would like a speaker from MRDF to give a talk at one of your meetings, contact them on 020 7486 5502, and they come with full equipment!



*Waiting to eat*



*Alan Smith & Rev Margaret*

## OLD WINDSOR

Our Harvest Festival celebrations began with a Harvest Supper. A simple meal, shared with friends early on a September Saturday evening. Good fellowship, good food, some harvest hymns – what more do you need? Our Harvest Service, led by Margaret, was appreciated by all who attended. As in recent years, our Harvest gifts went to the Windsor Homeless project, and so, rather than apples, carrots, cabbages and tomatoes ... our table was covered with tins and packets ... of baked beans, soup, meat, cereals and biscuits, and other items which will keep.



Our contribution to the 24 hours of Prayer Day, held at St Andrew's on 28th/29th September, was to give ideas for prayers for Sri Lanka and for the Manchester and Stockport District. Our designers put together a striking display for each area. The Sri Lankan display included the words of the Lord's Prayer in the languages spoken there – Tamil and Hindi. Our Manchester section carefully and prayerfully combined images from one of the most instantly recognisable artists, L S Lowry, with a section of model railway and reminding us of the start of railway transport.

We are back at the local First School, with Open the Book, and when we arrived there for the first week, we were greeted with "Now you are here, everything is back to normal!" It's wonderful to feel that our weekly contribution is appreciated so much. Our enthusiasm is undiminished, our desire to tell the children of God's love for them and for all is still uppermost in our minds as we prepare and as we present each week's story. It's a commitment that we all make with joy!

Our Travellers' Tales series continues, and we have a number of new speakers lined up, with interesting and "new" places to hear about ... Rev Malcolm White from Burnham, and his wife, Veronica, are taking a group to the Holy Land in November. They are then spending a week in Jordan where they lived for 6 years. They will be presenting their Travellers' Tale on Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> March. Do join us; book the date in your diary NOW!

At the time of writing, other dates have still to be finalised. Watch this space ...

Anne Haggarty

### Joint Events ... dates for your diary

The next meeting of the Smaller Churches Group is on Thursday, 28th November, 7.30 pm at Burnham.

#### November

Tuesday, 12 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	St Andrew's	Thames Valley Voices
Tuesday, 19 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	St Andrew's	Thames Valley Voices
Tuesday, 26 <sup>th</sup>	8 pm	St Andrew's	<i>Advent Voices</i> , led by Thames Valley Voices with Congregational worship and singing

#### December

Saturday, 7 <sup>th</sup>	9 -11 am	Old Windsor	Brunch – Shaw special!
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	7.15 pm	Eton Wick	Carol and Mince Pie evening

*Please refer to the Circuit Plan for details of special Christmas services.*

#### February

Saturday, 8 <sup>th</sup>	3 pm	Old Windsor	<b>Holy Beetle Drive</b>
Wednesday, 12 <sup>th</sup>	2.30 pm	Colnbrook & Poyle	<b>Circuit Healing Service</b>
Saturday, 22 <sup>nd</sup>	10.30 am	Saltau Centre	<b>Smaller Churches Away Day</b>

#### March

Thursday, 10 <sup>th</sup>	2.30 pm	Old Windsor	<b>Travellers' Tales</b> – Holy Land and Jordan Rev Malcolm and Mrs Veronica White
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*If you can support the above circuit events or our activities and events listed under our individual churches, in any way, please do! Thank you!*