



# Notes from the Riverbank

The newsletter for St Thomas of Canterbury Church in Goring,  
St Mary's Church in Streatley and St Andrew's Church in South Stoke

October 2014 – 12th edition

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## ● Welcome to the twelfth edition of "Notes from the Riverbank."

All contributions should be sent to Toria, the editor, by the 17<sup>th</sup> of each month at the usual email address [webcontent.thomandmary@gmail.com](mailto:webcontent.thomandmary@gmail.com). The on-line versions of the calendars are maintained by Glenn Cooke using the same email address. Bookings for the church or Canterbury Room should be made by contacting the UB Parish Secretary Sue Melsher at [suemelsher@parkway.co.uk](mailto:suemelsher@parkway.co.uk). We aim to produce the on-line and printed versions of each issue by the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month.

## ● Pastoral letter: Some thoughts from your Associate Priest



This year has seen an unusually large number of weddings, fairly evenly sprinkled over our three parishes. It's a huge privilege to spend time with these young and not-so-young couples, gaining their trust and allowing them to feel confident that their wedding service is in safe hands. One of the first questions I ask is why they want to be married in a church; why a religious service, when there are a number of other options? This frequently leads to some odd looks and strained silences! Surely I must know why they want a church wedding!

Trying to draw out their reasons is not always easy; many young people are not regular worshippers, and do not have the language of Christian faith with which to express themselves. But in nearly every case the answer is very simple: "it seems the right place" or "we wouldn't feel married if our wedding wasn't in a church" and sometimes "we want to make our vows in front of God." Whatever their background, for most of these couples who come wanting to be married in church, there appears to be a deeply rooted sense of it being the right place, a special place, a holy place.

Meeting with each couple on a number of occasions enables us to build-up a good relationship in which we can discuss all aspects of a Christian marriage, not just putting together an order of service. When it comes to the wedding, bride and groom have confidence in me and it enables me to have enough background information to put together a meaningful address for their marriage service.

It's important that couples "own" their wedding service without too much prompting from me. The stumbling block is often not being familiar with the Bible so what

reading from scripture to choose? There is a great sense of relief when they are given a list of suitable Bible readings to take away and make their choice together.

This year's choice of most popular reading surprised me. A passage from the Song of Solomon has come top for the first time in any year (for weddings I've conducted). The book is a wonderfully descriptive series of love poems, unique in the Bible, celebrating the most deeply rooted instincts of human sexuality and passionate love of a man and a woman. The purity of God-given love to his created, set in the beauty and generosity of his created world, a garden, an orchard abundant with flowers and fruit. There is so much to draw upon for use in a wedding address.

Without roots nothing will grow and without deep, well-nourished roots nothing will flourish and produce fruit, whether it be a garden plant, love for each other or our faith in God and his son Jesus.

We all need to be "rooted" to give us confidence and stability in life. Being well-rooted in Christian faith gives us that confidence to face the world loving God, loving our neighbour and being able to speak with love to others of our belief and trust in Jesus.

The more we are able to learn from biblical teaching, the more we are able to pray, the more we are able to share, the deeper our roots will penetrate, and the more we are deeply rooted the more we will blossom, and in blossoming so share the Good News of Jesus Christ.



Liz Dowding

PS. If in doubt as to how deep your roots may be, perhaps joining Paul's welcome course may be a good idea.

## ● Come and Sing UB Evensong



All singers are welcome to join us for a *Come and Sing Evensong Service* at 4pm on Sunday 5th October in St Thomas' Church. We will be singing Sumsion's *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in G*, Sanders' *Responses*, and Elgar's anthem *The Spirit of the Lord* with Michael Howell, our Musical Director.

There will be a practice starting at 2pm (arrive at 1.45pm at the latest to sort out music etc). After the practice, there will just be time for a cup of tea before the Evensong Service at 4pm.

You are also welcome to join the St Thomas' choir for additional optional practices from 7.30pm to 8.30pm on Friday 26th September and Friday 3rd October.



Elizabeth Parkinson, [parkinsonfamily1@btinternet.com](mailto:parkinsonfamily1@btinternet.com)

## ● Faure's Requiem at the All Souls' Day Service

 We will be singing Faure's *Requiem* as part of our All Souls' Day Service on Sunday 2nd November in St Thomas' Church at 4pm, and we would like to invite singers to join St Thomas' Choir for this Service.

There will be practices from 7:00pm to 8:00pm on Friday 17th October, Friday 24th October and Friday 31st October, and a final practice at 2pm on Sunday 2nd November.

If you are interested in joining us it would be helpful if you could email me before 17th October so that we can make sure we have enough copies of the music.

 Elizabeth Parkinson, [parkinsonfamily1@btinternet.com](mailto:parkinsonfamily1@btinternet.com)

## ● WAM: A lot of Mozart



Goring Chamber Choir will be performing Mozart's Mass in D-minor plus other Mozart motets and arias in St Thomas' Church at 7:30pm on Saturday 18th October.

Tickets are £12, or £10 for concessions and £5 for U16 and anyone in full time education. Refreshments will be sold at the interval.

 Graeme Pearce

## ● Ride and Stride



Ride and Stride started at 10am and we were "signing in" at our first Church – St. Mary's at Streatley – as the clock chimed. Goring and Streatley gave us a great start with welcoming friendly faces and four churches in 10 minutes.

Cycling from South Stoke to Woodcote we came across the first of several hills where I had to get off. At the top we saw two friends who were also doing Ride and Stride, but they were just ahead of us. With my usual competitive spirit I put lots of extra effort in to try to catch them up, but I just wasn't able to as they were too speedy. It was only when we got to Checkendon that we discovered that the reason we hadn't caught up with them was that they had stopped for refreshments in Woodcote Village Hall!

Henley, like Goring, was a good place to "clock up" several Churches. We did feel rather under-dressed and got some funny looks as we went round Henley Waitrose for some extra snacks, and looking at Brenda's photo of us I can now understand why. From there we made our way back via Harpsden, Shiplake, Binfield Heath, Sonning Common, Kidmore End, Goring Heath, Whitchurch Hill, Whitchurch and Pangbourne.

A special moment in the day was at the Allnutt's Chapel in Goring Heath. We were looking round the church when two white doves which had been resting above the pulpit flew round the church and out of the door.

After our last church in Pangbourne we walked most of the way back up to Whitchurch Hill, very grateful for a rest on the bench by the War Memorial half-way up. Our last excitement was a loud "Psssssst" noise when we were about a mile from home. Our first and only puncture of the day.



Thank you very much to all who sponsored us, particularly to Brenda's friends who sponsored us without knowing who we were. Half the money raised will go to St Thomas' Church and the other half to Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust (OHCT) – helping to repair and restore the churches of Oxfordshire.

Thank you also to all the people who manned churches; it made such a difference to be greeted by someone when we arrived.

 Elizabeth and Henry Parkinson

Henry and Elizabeth may still be sponsored for this heroic effort at:  
<https://www.justgiving.com/PARKINSON-RIDEnSTRIDE>

### ● Licensing of Judith Hogg



I am due to be licensed as an LLM (Licensed Lay Minister, formerly known as a "Reader") for our Benefice on Saturday November 1st at 11:00am at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, and would be very pleased for members of the benefice to attend. There is no limit on the number of tickets, but the organisers need to know numbers so if you would like to come, please let me know by 29<sup>th</sup> September. There is plenty of parking at the Redbridge Park and Ride.

 Judith Hogg, [judithhogg@waitrose.com](mailto:judithhogg@waitrose.com)

## ● Goring Lunch Club



The Goring Lunch Club for the elderly meets in the Goring Community Centre between 10am and 1pm every Tuesday and Wednesday to enjoy good company, coffee and tea, activities, and a two-course hot meal. The atmosphere is friendly and informal and Jonathan May (the Lunch Club Organiser) together with a willing team of volunteers, makes everyone feel welcome.

The cost of the morning is £6.00 and includes coffee/tea on arrival and lunch. If you would like to attend please call me or the Community Centre. Transport can be provided for those living locally.

Also, we could do with a few more helpers so if anyone feels they could spare some time, this would be much appreciated. Again, please get in touch with me.



Jonathan May, [jcmaqua2@aol.com](mailto:jcmaqua2@aol.com) or 01491 575525 (home)  
Community Centre, 01491 873565 (Tuesday or Wednesday mornings)

## ● Retiring collection: Starlight Children's Foundation



For many seriously and terminally ill children all over the country, the thought of their greatest wish coming true keeps them going through all the painful and distressing treatment they have to endure. Starlight grants children's wishes as varied as meeting a Formula 1 driver or favourite football team, dancing on the stage of the Royal Opera House, or visiting Disneyland in Paris. A recent wish to come true was for a 16-year-old cancer sufferer to have an Apple MacBook Pro to help him prepare for university – a positive hope for the future.

Starlight is a locally based charity which receives no funding other than by donations from the general public, so please give generously to the collection on 12<sup>th</sup> October.



Norma Bryant

## ● Dusters required!



On Saturday 18th October there will be a cleaning session at St Mary's church, Streatley, from 9:30am onwards. Everyone is welcome to come and help... with or without dusters! Coffee will be served.



Diana Fenton, 874408

● **Do you have a couple of hours a month to help your church?**



St Thomas' is looking for someone to help with a specific administrative task which would suit someone who prefers to be flexible in how they manage their time. Basic organizational and IT skills, as well as diary keeping, would be a real help.

If you think this may be a way in which you can contribute, talk to Brian, Brenda or one of the members of St Thomas' PCC to find out more.



Brenda Kerr Muir, Churchwarden

● **Paws for FoSM**



FoSM (Friends of St Mary's) had a stall at the annual Goring and Streatley Dog Show on 13th September.



Two artists were invited to exhibit their paintings; one sketched people's dogs on the day and took several commissions which will result in very welcome donations to the church restoration fund.



Graham Harvey