



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

December 2013 and January 2014 – 4th edition

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• Welcome to the fourth issue of "Notes from the Riverbank."

All contributions should be sent to Toria, the editor, by the 17th of each month at the usual email address 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. We aim to produce the on-line and printed versions of each issue by the 25th of each month.

• Pastoral letter: New beginnings



'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' (John 1: 1)

Christmas is a time of traditions for many of us. We choose to eat the same types of food, often follow the same timetable on the day itself, play the same games or watch the same films. But Christmas should also be a time to experience new beginnings.

The Christmas story has a new beginning at its heart, the birth of Jesus Christ. Through this birth Christians believe that God came to earth in human form, to experience the full breadth of our humanity, and to offer to those who choose to follow him the gift of eternal life. As you approach this familiar story this Christmas, look for something new in your traditional understanding of what happened that night in Bethlehem. What new insights might you discover? How might you be challenged and encouraged in your journey of faith?

As a benefice there are new beginnings on the horizon as interviews for the new vicar are taking place in December. Do pray for those who carry the responsibility for making this selection and that God will make it very clear to them who they should choose to lead this benefice. As I prepare for my own new beginnings as part of the Hermitage Team, I send you every blessing and thank you for the support and love you've shown me during my time as your curate. Happy Christmas.



Revd Luci Heyn

● A tribute to Ian Wallace



It is with great sadness that we pay tribute to Ian Wallace who died peacefully on October 23rd with some of his family around him. Ian and Monica came from Reading to Streatley in 2004 not long after being retired from his post as a lecturer in the Agricultural Faculty of the University.

Ian grew up in Teddington, went to Agricultural College and gained National Diplomas in Agriculture and Farm Management. After college he was recruited by the Crown Agents to work as an Agricultural Officer in Kenya helping small scale farmers grow tea and coffee. It was here that he was touched by the prayers of some vibrant African Christians who worked under him and moved from nominal Christianity to making a personal commitment of his life to Christ.

He now began to feel that being a government officer gave him a special opportunity to be a different kind of missionary reaching people that other missionaries may not reach. Some of those he worked with were future political leaders, whilst some of those he fellowshipped with in the East African Revival Movement went on to become Bishops and Church leaders. In one appointment where he stayed for six years he became a Methodist local preacher and also mixed with Baptists and Presbyterians, but at heart he remained an Anglican.

Ian met his wife Monica through mutual friends in Nairobi and they were married in 1964. Richard, their first child was born in Uganda; Jeremy, Sarah and David were born in Kenya to which Ian returned to become principal of an agricultural training college. In 1975 the family returned to the UK and settled in Reading where Ian did an MSc course in Agricultural Extension at the University. Ian and Monica moved to Fiji in January 1977 where he became Principal of Fiji Agricultural College before returning to Reading permanently in 1979. He worked for TEAR Fund, a Christian Charity supporting and advising on agricultural and development projects all over the world which necessitated much travelling. This was followed by a lectureship in the Agricultural Faculty of Reading University in 1984.

Ian, Monica and the children became committed and active members of Greyfriars Church for many years. When Ian and Monica moved to Streatley, they joined St Mary's and Ian began training as a Lay Reader completing after the United Benefice was formed in 2007. His faithful biblical preaching coupled with a gracious and confident Christian witness was a challenge and help to many. He will be missed not only for what he said but for what he was, as is his dear wife Monica, who died in October 2009. "With Christ which is far better".



Revd. Peter Downham

John Rogers writes: "I have received an e-mail from the Treasurer of the Kampala Music School, with his profound thanks to all who contributed to the fund following Ian Wallace's memorial service. As a result over £1000 was donated to the school and everyone's generosity was much appreciated."

● Come and Sing Advent Carol Service at St Thomas'



All singers are welcome to join us for a "Come and Sing" Advent Carol Service on Sunday 1st December.

There will be a practice starting at 2pm (arrive at 1.45pm latest to sort out music and so on). After the practice, there will just be time for tea and cake before the candlelit Advent Carol Service at 4pm. There will also be an additional voluntary practice from 7.45pm to 8.30pm on Friday 29th November.

We will be singing "Christ be our light" (arr. Howell), "Prepare ye the way" (Wise), "Adam lay ybounden" (arr. Howell) and "Sleepers Wake" (Mendelssohn) under the musical direction of Michael Howell, accompanied on the organ by Philip Kaye and trumpet by Callum Walsh. For more details email parkinsonfamily1@btinternet.com or phone Elizabeth Parkinson on 872020.



Michael Howell

● Posada: Making room for Jesus this Christmas



Can you offer Mary and Joseph a bed for the night on their journey to Bethlehem?

Posada is an old Mexican tradition where young people dressed as Mary and Joseph travelled from house to house asking for a room for the night and telling people about the imminent arrival of Jesus in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

Modern day Posada uses nativity figures of Mary and Joseph who travel from place to place. This gives each 'host' the chance to create their own celebration in their home or work place.

All you need to do is add your name to the Journey Rota for a night that will suit you to "host" Mary and Joseph. The host for the previous night will contact you to make arrangements to bring the figures to your home at a time to suit both of you.

For the evening you "host" Mary and Joseph you can choose to do whatever you like. Why not invite friends and family to meet them and enjoy a mince pie or two whilst re-telling the Christmas story? Included in their travelling box is a journey diary so you can note what Mary and Joseph did during their stay, and a disposable camera so you can record their stay in pictures as well.

The next day you need to take Mary and Joseph to the next host on the Journey Rota, the host on Christmas Eve making arrangements for them to be brought to church on Christmas morning. It's as simple as that!



Contact Revd Luci Heyn on 871970



Christmas at St Mary's



● On **Sunday 15th December at 10.30am** St Mary's will be welcoming young people dressed as their favourite character from the Christmas Story, to the annual Noisy Nativity. Some costumes will be available in church. After the service we will be having a short party until about 11.30am so that our families can say their goodbyes to Revd Luci Heyn.

● On **Sunday 22nd December from 11.30am** we shall be opening our Christingle Factory in the Morrell Room for children to decorate oranges with sweets. Refreshments are provided for willing factory workers.

● **Christmas Eve at 3pm** is our Christingle Service for young people (and the young at heart!). The collection from this service will be in aid of the Church of England Children's Society (see below).

● **Christmas Eve at 11.30pm** is the United Benefice Midnight Mass, held in St Mary's only.

● On **Christmas Day at 10.30am** we shall be holding our service of Lessons and Carols at St Mary's. Do bring the family along to welcome the Baby Jesus and join in singing some of our favourite carols.



Christmas at St Thomas'

● On **Monday 23 December from 10:30-11:30am** we will be opening our Christingle Factory in the Canterbury Room. Refreshments are provided for the willing factory workers.

● **Christmas Eve at 3pm** is St Thomas' Christingle Service for young people (and the young at heart!).

● **Christmas Day at 8am** is a United Benefice Service of Holy Communion, BCP, held in St Thomas' only. The collection from this service will be in aid of the Starlight Children's Foundation (see below).

● UB Boxing Day Bring and Share Lunch



Everyone is welcome to a "Bring and share lunch" on Boxing Day in the Canterbury Room, St Thomas' Church, from 12:30 to 2:30pm. Please think of anyone you know who may be on their own that day and invite them to come along.



For further details contact Revd Liz Dowding on 873140.

● Christmas collections

As you are enjoying your Christmas festivities, please think of all the children in the world who are confined to hospital, or who don't have access to a hospital, or those who desperately need a bit of help and support in this world. Please give generously to the retiring collections on Christmas Day. Thank you.



There are over 50,000 homeless and street children, disabled, young carers, children in trouble with the law and refugees who need help and support. The outreach programme's work is to try to change the world in which these children live, right injustices and provide a safe environment. The **Church of England Children's Society** works directly with these vulnerable young people. Please support the efforts which make a difference to the young and marginalized trying to cope in difficult circumstances in the UK.



Jan Thomson

<http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/>



At a time when a seriously or terminally ill child has little or nothing to look forward to except more painful and distressing treatment, the opportunity of having their greatest wish granted by the **Starlight Children's Foundation** brings excitement and anticipation into their lives. This is considered to be a turning point in as many as 70 percent of recoveries. Starlight also works in hospitals to create colourful entertaining areas, and to provide toys, video games, computers, and crafts, as well as, most importantly, the opportunity to meet other children in a similar position.



Norma Bryant

<http://www.starlight.org.uk/> (Supported by St Thomas' church)



Mercy Ships (Hope on the Horizon) recently installed a CT scanner on board the African Mercy ship, providing free scans for surgery for patients in Pointe Noire in the Congo. One patient who benefited was spirited 17 year old Grace, whose facial tumour had been growing for 10 years. The new scanner provided critically needed scans to enable her surgeon to successfully remove the huge tumour. Also in the Congo the largest hospital ship, Africa Mercy, began surgeries. More than 7,300 people queued from early morning. By the end of the day 4236 men, women and children had been assessed as possible patients; 1326 received appointment cards to be seen by a surgeon for further evaluation during Africa Mercy's stay in the country. Mercy Ships really do bring Hope on the Horizon to many and in so many ways. Your continued generous support will be most welcome.



Pat Nias

<http://www.mercyships.org.uk/> (Supported by St Thomas' church)



At the November PCC meeting we agreed that we should make a Christmas contribution to people who are suffering financial hardship. There will be a basket at the back of St Mary's church during December to collect contributions for the **Wallingford Food Bank**. The recommendations we were given was to send some Christmas goodies such as Christmas puddings, mince pies, crackers, chocolates. Every gift, however small will be greatly appreciated.



Tina Farr

● Alterations to Services at St Mary's from January 2014



Resource within the clergy team that was already stretched with the departure of the Revd Mark Blamey will, with the appointment of Revd Luci Heyn as a member of the clergy team in Hermitage from January next year and the sad death of Ian Wallace, be reduced to the point where a reduction in the number of services has become inevitable until a new vicar is appointed.

The wardens and clergy team have decided that from January until May 2014 when we trust a new incumbent will be in place, St Mary's family service will be combined with that of St Thomas'. This service will be held at St Thomas' church on the first Sunday of the month at 10.00am. On the third Sunday of each month, the family service at St Mary's will be replaced with a combined parish communion service with St. Andrew's, the location of which will alternate on a monthly basis between the two churches. These services will be held at the usual time of 10.30am.

Thus the services on Sunday 19th January and Sunday 16th March will be held in St Andrew's; the service on Sunday 16th February will be held in St Mary's. There will be a United Benefice service for Mothering Sunday on 30th March at 10.30am in St Mary's, led by our Area Dean, Revd Kevin Davies from the Langtree Team Ministry.

St Thomas' church offers excellent facilities and resources to conduct services that are truly geared to specifically meet the needs of families. Their congregation and team look forward to welcoming families from St Mary's during the period of the interregnum and to providing them with a richly rewarding and enjoyable experience each month.



Alison Gray (Churchwarden)

● Friends of St Mary's, Streatley



The Friends held a Wine Tasting and Supper Fundraiser in the Morrell Room on October 26th which was a great success with 80 people attending. The magnificent sum of nearly £3000 was raised on the night. This included a very generous contribution from the Gatehampton Trust; we are extremely grateful not only to them but to everybody who came along and supported us. In addition a number of people who could not attend kindly made donations.

This was the second major event this year and The Friends committee worked hard both in the planning and on the night to make the event as enjoyable as possible. Many thanks in particular must go to Sarah Brownlee for organising the event, greatly helped by Susan Carter and Jane Knight and also to John Rogers who managed to sell all the tickets for the bottle tombola. Our winemaster was Ian Hewson of the Wine-Man business in Yattendon. He did a great job in entertaining and educating everybody to the mysteries of wine tasting.

As always, the monies raised will go to help fund the repair and maintenance work needed by the Church. In the two years since the Friends were established, they have now raised over £20,000 from a mixture of donations, gift aid, future pledges and

fundraising events. This is a great start but there is still a long way to go in helping the church meet its target of £100,000 to preserve the fabric of the building over the next 4 or 5 years.



Graham Harvey, Chairman, Friends of St Mary's

● Cap badge found



A cap badge from 1944 was found in the church following St Mary's Remembrance Day service. If anyone knows whose badge this is could you please contact me via the web site. Thank you.



John Rogers

● Operation SatNav: Everyone was welcome (part 2)



For those of you who haven't yet seen them on the web site, here is a selection of some of the wonderful photos taken during Operation SatNav in September.





● **And finally...**



Spare a thought for Robin and Toria over Christmas. They will be slaving away over hot mince pies and keyboards to (hopefully) produce a shiny new UB web in the New Year before the Diocese cuts us off.



Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and peaceful new year to everyone!