



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

February 2015 – 15th edition

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● Welcome to the fifteenth edition 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 Jenny Hall at jandjh2@btinternet.com. We aim to produce the on-line and printed versions of each issue by the 25th of each month.

● A letter from your vicar



Coming to Goring, Streatley and South Stoke is an adventure for me and my family, which the warmth of your welcome is making a happy one; thank you!

It is fascinating to gain some insight into both Christian and the wider communities as I enjoy meeting and listening to a wide cross section of people. Alongside this, I have been reading the newly published fruits of the Church of England's research into what helps churches to grow - both in faith and numbers. The report is called *From Anecdote to Evidence* and may be viewed on the internet. Considering this, it is apparent that all three church communities have great strengths and also challenges to address together. As I have reflected with our wardens, two early priorities have emerged:

Creating more opportunities for me to worship with and meet you.

I am so grateful to each of the three Church Councils for supporting so fully a change of Service times with effect from 1st February. This will enable me to worship with each congregation at least twice per month. Research has shown that a leader's effectiveness has a profound influence on growth and so as we are able to meet and worship together more, will you please pray that I might offer you of the best that God gives me?

I am excited by the possibilities that these changes offer, not least by Michael Howell having kindly agreed to become Organist and Choirmaster of Streatley, in addition to his appointment at Goring. I am also grateful to South Stoke for slightly changing the pattern of their services so that there will be a Communion service at 11.15am every week, either at Streatley or South Stoke. To make the most of these opportunities, let's work together, co-operating with our Heavenly Father, to invite and welcome many who don't yet share in the life of the local Christian community; and:

Building a financial foundation that will allow us to concentrate on our primary task.

All three churches have worried about having enough money to pay their bills in 2014. When we are obedient to our Lord's call, he promises that he will provide the resources. The Goring PCC has been delighted to see this happen in a dramatic way in 2014.

So that we don't find a shortage of money distracting us from the role God calls us to,

beginning at the United Benefice service on 1st March, we will have a *Stewardship Renewal*. This will give each of us the opportunity to reflect on God's wonderful generosity to us and decide what part he is calling each of us to play in making sure that lack of money ceases to be a distraction for his church in these villages. As a preacher said, the good news is "God has given us all that we need," but the bad news is, "it is still in our personal bank accounts." Do please begin to consider this prayerfully.

Also, would you please also pray for us as we explore various possibilities that might enable a younger person to join the ministry team. It has been widely demonstrated that "like attracts like" and so we shouldn't underestimate the importance of this.

I have a growing sense of excitement as, together, we draw closer to God and look forward to seeing his Kingdom growing in this benefice.

With my prayers for you all,



The Rev Paul Boughton

PS. Each day I pray for church members and other who I get to know, praying for each at least once per month. If you have a specific prayer, do let me know.

● Main Sunday Services

	9.30am@Goring	11.15am@Streatley	11.15am@South Stoke
1st Sunday	Family Worship	Holy Communion	Good news
2nd Sunday	Holy Communion	Mattins	Holy Communion
3rd Sunday	Good news	Holy Communion	Mattins
4th Sunday	Holy Communion	Mattins	Holy Communion
5th Sunday	UB Service at each church in turn		

● Weekly Service of Holy Communion

8.00am@Goring

1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays

8.00am@Streatley

2nd and 4th Sundays

● Midweek Communion

On Wednesday morning at 10.30am at St Thomas' Church, Goring.

● Coffee in St Mary's Church



As an experiment, the coffee ladies have kindly agreed to serve coffee in St Mary's Church from 10.30am before the service. There has been some discussion as to whether sherry after the service might be a better idea. However, the PCC decided we should try coffee during February and Lent, and review this at Easter. Comments will be welcome.

● Women's World Day of Prayer service



There will be a Women's World Day of Prayer service at Our Lady and St John Catholic Church, Ferry Lane, Goring on Friday 6th March at 1.30pm. We will be praying for the Bahamas and the theme is: *Jesus said unto them, "Do you know what I have done for you?"* This will be followed by refreshments; everyone welcome.



Brenda Kerr Muir, Churchwarden, St Thomas' Church

● **New Musical Director at St Mary's**



A huge benefit of the change in service time is the appointment of Michael Howell, currently Musical Director of St Thomas', to the same position at St Mary's. The staggering of the services will allow Michael to play the organ and direct the choirs for both churches. We are all familiar with Michael's expertise from hearing him play at United Benefice Services and at the recent beautiful Lessons and Carols. We look forward to welcoming Michael as our regular organist for the first time on Sunday 1st February.

● **Thank you to Elaine Cox**



Our heartfelt thanks are due to Elaine Cox for so ably arranging our locum organists and music since Mo Watkins retired several years ago. The sourcing and booking of organists has been a challenging and time-consuming task, and we particularly commend her for her encouragement of young talent such as Christopher Burroughs and Christian Haigh. Both, I am certain, will be names to look out for in the musical world in the near future. We will present Elaine with a small token of our appreciation on Sunday 1st February.



Alison Gray (Churchwarden)

● **Ecumenical Lent Groups**



Once again, people from all churches in Goring, Streatley and South Stoke will be joining together in small home groups to study a Lent course for the five weeks before Easter. We will begin on Monday 23rd February and end with a combined celebration after Easter on 14th April. The course is *Words from Calvary* by Trevor Partridge and the cost is £4.50. Please join us... everyone is welcome.



Judy Crawford

● **Coffee and Cake *with Company***



As the United Benefice looks forward into the New Year we must prepare ourselves for interesting and challenging changes. Changes not for changes' sake, I trust, but to present ourselves as a united Christian gathering with hearts, minds and particularly eyes looking outward to those who are in need of God's love and our more practical gifts of companionship, understanding and support.

Coffee and Cake has been offered since the beginning of 2010 on the last Saturday of each month from January until October, as a safe, relaxed and welcoming environment in which the church can welcome people to share company and conversation, while enjoying coffee and delicious homemade cake. I'm pleased that a similar coffee morning takes place very successfully on the third Wednesday of each month in St. Andrew's.

As we seek to be a well-integrated Benefice (whilst retaining important differences) our Christian values must remain the same to share God's love in all its forms. Over the past year the numbers attending the monthly Saturday morning Coffee and Cake have remained static. However the number volunteering to help has dramatically fallen and this makes it difficult to offer the quality of hospitality we would wish. This is particularly so with people who come on their own seeking company as well as coffee and cake.

As we seek to have in place a more coherent pastoral caring team across the Benefice, *Coffee and Cake with Company* could well be an opportunity to bring together people who need help and encouragement to get out to meet with others in non-threatening surroundings. I would welcome *Coffee and Cake with Company* becoming a Benefice date in the diary. However to do this and to make it successful a reasonable number of people from the three parishes are needed to commit themselves to the idea, as well as committing to making it work.

If you like the idea of sharing God's love in this way and have some time on a Saturday morning (the more people who are willing to help, the fewer Saturdays they would be called upon to do so) please contact me or drop-in between 10.30am and 12.15pm one *Coffee and Cake Saturday*; the next events are on 31st January, 28th February and 28th March.



Liz Dowding, 873140

● **Christingle: 3.15pm on Sunday 8th February in The Morrell Room**



Christingle was established by a Moravian Church in Germany in 1747, as a symbol of Christ's light and love. It was adopted by The Children's Society in the 1960s and has recently been celebrated in Goring and Streatley in the week before Christmas, often on Christmas Eve itself. This year however, it was decided to concentrate on Noisy Nativity and Crib Services in the run-up to Christmas and move Christingle to the season of Candlemas when the Church celebrates the presentation of Christ in the Temple and old Simeon prophesied that Jesus would become the 'Light of the World'.

When making Christingle Oranges, the children place a red ribbon round the orange to represent the blood of Christ. Sweets and dried fruit on cocktail sticks are placed in the orange to represent the fruits of the earth and a candle is pushed into the top to represent Jesus as the Light of the World. What more appropriate time then for us to hold our Christingle Service than at the season of Candlemas?

Please join us in the Morrell Room at 3.15pm on Sunday 8th February to make our Christingles, chat with our vicar, Paul, and enjoy tea and cake. A short service will follow at 4pm in St Mary's Church. This is an occasion for families from the villages of Goring, Streatley and South Stoke to come together and everyone will be made most welcome. All materials for making a Christingle will be provided. There will be a retiring collection in aid of The Children's Society.



Alison Gray; phone 873181 or email alison@thegrays.myzen.co.uk

● **The Three Pressed Men**



The Three Pressed Men (a Cholsey group who played at St Mary's Harvest Supper in 2013) are now booked to present a concert of traditional music from the British Isles in St Mary's on Saturday 16th May at 7:30pm. The concert will be in aid of St Mary's church funds. Further details nearer the time.



Stella