



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

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● Welcome to the twenty-third 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.



Pastoral letter: A code for the high way

When a former Vicar of this parish confessed to a Sunday congregation that he had recently been 'booked' for speeding there was an immediate and audible reaction – of sympathy and amusement. The 'sympathy' came from, I suspect, the non-drivers in the church: the 'amusement' was shown by those who could identify with the Vicar's embarrassment. When the same priest then asked how many had been fined, or been ordered to attend a driving course for such an offence, a significant number of men and women felt obliged to raise their hands. I was one of them. No doubt we all felt more comfortable admitting that misdemeanor in the company of our spiritual leader who was similarly at fault.

Speeding in our car is a serious offence. A moment of inattention and carelessness can lead to the most appalling accidents. But is it not true, fellow drivers, that once we get behind the wheel of a car we can be subject to an alarming personality change? Even the most gentle Christian soul can turn into a monster. In that particular missile – our car – we have power and control. We can make decisions and see immediate, dramatic results. Nowhere else can we do such tricks. For the duration of our journey we are kings and queens of the road. It is our domain.

Jehu, the tenth king of Israel, and a keen charioteer, had a reputation as 'a road burner'. We might well take the reading of the Old Testament (*2 Kings 9.20*) as a warning then and not engage "in the driving of Jehu, for he driveth furiously".

Over the years, I have encouraged congregations to relate their faith to their home and family life and to their daily work. I have never, until now, appealed for an appropriate witness on and around our busy roads. We spend much of our lives in our vehicles, traveling to and from our homes; and it is on the road that we tend to lose our tempers and 'become different people'. Indeed we have all heard of incidents involving 'road rage', arguments with traffic wardens, irritation on account of impediments on congested motorways, multiple injuries due to foggy conditions

and downright human carelessness. The on-rush of emergency services and the saddest news of tragic and avoidable deaths must concern us all. Such matters will be with us for a long time to come.

An obscure character in the Bible called Agag made his way "delicately and fearfully" (*1 Samuel 15.32*). That may not be the pattern of behaviour we would desire of a youngster learning to drive for he/she must have confidence to make snap and appropriate decisions on the motorway. But we must set out on our journey with care and courtesy; and with a sense of responsibility for ourselves and our fellow travellers. That is the Christian paradigm. And it is a message that holds good for the whole of our life. It applies to every one of us, as pilgrims on the Way.



Leighton Thomas



Remembrance Sunday 8th November

I hope that you can join us on Remembrance Sunday to commemorate those who bravely fought and died serving their Country. The Act of Remembrance will take place at 10.50am at the War Memorial in each of the parishes followed by a Service of Remembrance in each of the churches.

We will also be having the usual 9.30am Holy Communion Service at St. Thomas' with crèche and Tom Toms but the service will be slightly shorter than usual to give everyone time to walk to the War Memorial by 10.50am.



The Rev. Paul Boughton



The Royal British Legion services of remembrance

The Royal British Legion is the national custodian of Remembrance, safeguarding the memory of those who fought and died in conflict, and the poppy is the symbol of Remembrance and hope. The Legion also provides lifelong support for the Armed Forces community, serving men and women, veterans and their families, making sure that its beneficiaries can live in comfort and dignity. That need goes on and on and your support is as important as ever.

Please give generously for the work of the Legion at the services of Remembrance on Sunday 8th November at the churches in the Benefice.



Tony Coward



Learning about the Old Testament

The Old Testament series of sermons exploring the big picture of the Old Testament will conclude on 15th November with a break on 1st November for All Saints Day.



The Rev. Paul Boughton



All Saints Service on Sunday 1st November

You are all invited to attend the annual All Saints Service which will be held this year at 4pm on Sunday 1st November at St. Thomas of Canterbury Church, Goring. It is an occasion during which we give thanks for the lives of those departed and are reminded of our Christian hope. Please invite your families and friends to this special service especially if they have been recently bereaved. Everyone welcome!



The Rev. Paul Boughton



Welcoming the School Communities to Church

I am delighted to welcome the school communities of all three parishes to church. South Stoke Primary School have regular assemblies in St. Andrew's Church; Streatley Primary School are having three services in St. Mary's Church this Autumn Term for Harvest, Remembrance and Carols, while Goring Primary School had a service in St. Thomas' to celebrate Harvest Festival and will also have a Carol Service in church later this Term.

I would be very grateful if you could spare your time to welcome teachers and parents to church at any of the school services. If you are interested, please call me on 875651 for dates and more details.



The Rev. Paul Boughton



Supervised crèche every week at St. Thomas' Sunday Service!

I am very pleased to let you know that we now have a supervised crèche during every 9.30am service at St. Thomas' during term time. The first Sunday of every month continues to be a Family Service (with supervised crèche) and the second, third and fourth Sundays are a Holy Communion Service with supervised crèche and Tom Toms Sunday School. Please come and join us!



The Rev. Paul Boughton



Collection for the Children's Society

The Christingle Service will be held on Sunday 31st January at 4:00pm at St. Mary's. The collection at the service will go to support the Society which works directly with over 50,000 children in the UK.

In the United Kingdom there are thousands of children who need our help: homeless and street children, disabled, young carers, children in trouble with the law, and child refugees who need great support. The outreach programme of The Children's Society tries to change the world in which these children live, right injustices and provide a safe living 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



Dust-busting at St Thomas' on Saturday 21st November

Spiders have been busy at St Thomas' and dust is accumulating!

We plan a major Autumn Clean on 21st November from 10am onwards and are looking for volunteers to help restore the sparkle to St Thomas'. There will be a wide variety of tasks to choose from as we will be tackling cobwebs, cleaning, dusting and polishing. If you feel that a sitting job would suit you best then vacuuming kneelers is probably for you. There is sure to be something to suit you.

Your help would be greatly appreciated; even an hour, morning or afternoon would be a genuinely helpful contribution. There will be refreshments and a warm welcome for everyone. Contact me if you would like to help or just turn up on the day.



Jenny Boyd on 872109



Church cleaning at St Mary's on Saturday 28th November

Once again it is time for our pre-Christmas clean of our Church.

Everyone is welcome to join us at any time from 9.30am onwards on Saturday 28th November. We are usually finished by 11.30am but the more hands available the sooner we are done.

You don't need to bring anything but yourself as cleaning materials and coffee are provided, but the odd duster always comes in handy.



Barbara Taylor