



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

July and August 2014 – 10th edition

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● Welcome to the tenth 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 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.

● From your new Vicar



Thank you so much for all the love and support that you have shown us during this, our first month in the Benefice, especially as we have been supporting Liz's family as her dear father's health deteriorated and following his death last week. As Christians we know that our relationships with God and with each other are most important, not least through the lengths that Jesus went to to restore our relationship with God.

During my first weeks I have been considering how we can grow and develop the church family in this Benefice. When there are four Sundays in a month and with each parish holding its main service at almost the same time, two of the parishes will only see me once a month, whilst another will see me twice. Taken together with the likelihood of having no Stipendiary Assistant Curate for the foreseeable future, it is clear that we must consider how we can plan for growth in the Christian Community as we look forward. These are topics that I am beginning to discuss with our wardens and which I will discuss with each PCC in the coming weeks; will you please pray for us as we consider this – and do offer your suggestions. However, there is one initiative that I would like to ask your support for in the immediate future.

Towards the end of September there will be a Benefice-wide "Welcome Group". This will be an introduction to, or refresher about, our core beliefs as Christians, covering topics like the life of Jesus, how to pray and how being a Christian might affect our relationships. For those who would like it to, this can lead to being confirmed. But there will be no pressure; this is to help people to explore Christianity and make their own choices.

Research, written up in the recent publication "From anecdote to evidence" shows that churches that set out to grow in numbers and depth are in fact the churches that grow; so this is where you can help...

Would you please pray and think about which of your friends, neighbours and colleagues you could invite. Having a new vicar is a great opportunity to encourage people to think again about whether they might come along and I think you will be surprised how many are just waiting for an invitation. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the people we love and live amongst could discover God and his love for themselves? This group could help them to do just that.

Whilst I know only a few people in the Benefice, as a whole church community we know a large proportion; that's why it will make such a difference if we can work together.

The group will meet on Tuesday evenings in the Canterbury Room in term time; it is aimed at all ages of adults who want to explore the basics of the Christian faith. The first part looks at what Christians believe and lasts six weeks; then for those who would like to continue, there are parts two (how to help our faith to grow) and three (how being a Christian affects our daily living) – that's a total of nine more weeks and perhaps a social evening or two.

As Christian people, we have discovered that God welcomes us! A prayer in the communion service reminds us: "when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home." So let's think carefully and prayerfully about who we might invite to this group, so they too may find God's welcome home. What a very exciting prospect!



Rev Paul Boughton

● The Thames Pilgrim Way



For 2014, the Oxford Diocese is launching a brand new pilgrimage route called "The Thames Pilgrim Way." At 104 miles, the Thames Pilgrim Way follows a well-established national trail, and winds majestically through the very heart of the diocese and four archdeaconries. To launch the new Way, Bishop John is to lead the first pilgrimage along the route from 18th to 28th September, travelling from Moulsoford to Tilehurst on Wednesday 24th September. Everyone is welcome to join him for an hour... a day... or the whole 104 miles!

For further details: <http://www.oxford.anglican.org/mission-ministry/projects/pilgrimage-2/>

● Grand Day Out! Say farewell to Bishop John



Come to Oxford to bid farewell to Bishop John and enjoy a Grand Day Out! We don't often get together, but from 10am on Saturday 20th September we're inviting our whole diocesan family to gather in the centre of Oxford from 10am until 5pm, to

give thanks for Bishop John's ministry among us, and to think about our onward journey.



There'll be prayer and worship, a feast of different activities, a chance to meet both Emma Bridgewater and Mary Berry, plus a massive picnic on Christ Church Meadow. We'll end with a huge open-air Eucharist. Everyone is invited – young, old, lay, ordained, families, single people, life-long Anglicans and people new to church. Everyone is welcome!

For more information, to book and register for further information and updates please go to <http://www.oxford.anglican.org/granddayout>.

● Ride and Stride



This year's Oxford Historic Churches Trust Ride and Stride will take place on Saturday 13th September from 10am until 6pm. Last year the event raised £127,000 including £18,000 Gift Aid rebate – a remarkable achievement.

Some statistics from last year's event:

Total number of participants	819
Average number of churches visited	13.8
Average amount raised	£182.90
Average amount raised per church visited	£13.25
% of cyclists	52.0%
% of walkers	20.6%
% of welcomers	7.4%
% of participants who did not state how they took part	15.4%
% of participants aged over 50	55.7%
% of participants aged under 18	16.0%
% of participants who did not identify their age range	14.0%
Number of participants aged over 80	32

In 2013 we were busy with SatNav events but we did offer a welcome including to Bishop Colin and the Trust chairman who were cycling that day. Let's see if some of us can participate again this year so please note the date – half the money we raise always comes to our own Church funds and OHCT has promised us a grant towards repairs to the Tower. For more information see <http://www.ohct.org.uk/>



Brenda Kerr Muir

● **Friends of music at Goring in association with the Goring and Streatley Festival**



Cello Recital: (Cello) and Alison Rhind (Piano)

Wednesday 2nd July at 1.00 pm, St Thomas', Goring

The programme will include music by Mendelssohn, Rachmaninoff, Debussy and Brahms.

Jane and Alison are kindly supported by the Countess of Munster Trust.



Jane has performed in venues such as Wigmore Hall and the Purcell Room, and has appeared as soloist in concertos by Elgar and Haydn; future performances are booked for the Royal Albert Hall and Royal Festival Hall. Alison is one of our leading chamber pianists and has played with many well-known virtuosi, including Nicola Benedetti, Rostropovich and Menuhin. She has also been official accompanist for several international competitions, including BBC Young Musician of the Year.

Tickets are £12, or £10 purchased in advance from Festival outlets or Inspiration in the Arcade, Goring.



Ruisi String Quartet

Friday 4th July, 7.30 pm, St Thomas', Goring

The Ruisi Quartet will be playing music by Haydn, Beethoven and Debussy.

<http://ruisiquartet.com/>

Although formed as recently as 2012, the Quartet has established a reputation as an exciting, expressive ensemble, performing at leading venues including the Wigmore Hall and have a full diary of country-wide and international engagements for 2014.

Tickets are £15, or £13 purchased in advance from Festival outlets or Inspiration in the Arcade, Goring.

● **Collection for WaterAid**



WaterAid works in 26 countries worldwide, transforming lives by providing clean water and hygienic toilets. This summer is an especially good time to give money to WaterAid because until the 9th September the UK government is doubling donations; details of this scheme and the "To be a girl" campaign are at <http://www.wateraid.org/uk> or contribute to the collection at St Thomas' on 13th July.



Patsy Calder