



# 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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- All enquiries 01491 875651 or [stthomasmaryandrew@gmail.com](mailto:stthomasmaryandrew@gmail.com)



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## ● Welcome to the twenty-eighth 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 Jenny Hall at [jandjh2@btinternet.com](mailto:jandjh2@btinternet.com). We aim to produce the on-line and printed versions of each issue by the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month.



### **Pastoral Letter: Entirely without prejudice**

The winter of 1830 was so severe that some of our superstitious forebears asked the question: who is responsible for this widespread destruction of property and calamitous loss of life? They did not look far for the answer. Roman Catholics are to blame, they said, together with those parliamentary playmakers who have now permitted papists to build their own churches. (Roman Catholic Relief Act, 1829). It is a divine judgement. That conclusion was ignorant and irrational, of course. It was sheer prejudice. This time the Pope was the bogeyman.

Those of us of a certain age will recall the venomous outpourings of that mischievous lay-about Alf Garnett (superbly played by Warren Mitchell) in *Till Death Do Us Part*. This fictional character remains the archetypal presentation of British prejudice, the voice that is prepared to utter an obscenity against all that is foreign to him or beyond his very limited understanding; those of a different colour or gender or political affiliation or sexual orientation or general appearance or ethnicity or anything else that you can imagine. He breathed out that kind of poison that creates an infection capable of spreading rapidly through a family, a tribe, a football crowd and a nation. Prejudice has its own potency. Its contagion is particularly virulent when it travels in the guise of laddish bonhomie and amusing asides. In its power, "good" jokes are funny and repeatable especially when they are at someone else's expense. In that sense prejudice has a dynamic "apostolic" quality which more properly belongs to the devil!

We hear of mild forms of prejudice in the Old Testament. In Genesis (46.34) for example, we are told that "all shepherds are abhorrent to the Egyptians." (That is some generalization!) In Judges (12.5) we hear of how one tribe protects itself from another by asking would-be immigrants to pronounce properly the word "shibboleth." That was always a tongue-twister for the alien. (Come to think of it, some social groups are quite snooty about accents, today!)

Far more serious – for us in the 21st century – is the attitude of that shiny sovereign lord, David, the shepherd king of Israel. He had a horror for the blind, deformed and disabled, judging them, irrationally, to have been guilty of some sin that had brought about this imperfect condition. In this case the prejudice entered society through convention and the hallowed traditions of Mosaic Law (see Leviticus 21:17-23). We must beware!

The lesson we have here is that as Christians we endeavour to read all Scriptures "with the mind of Christ;" the one who breaks down barriers between us; the one who calls into his kingdom all sorts and conditions of men - and women and children - in order to make us holy, blameless and irreproachable. Significantly, he has a particular love for the weak and vulnerable. In the meantime we all bear the infection, that sinister and destructive demon of human prejudice.

When hearing of the home town of Jesus, one man answered with world-weary cynicism: "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" The disciple Andrew might have continued the prejudice with "and from the home of a carpenter at that!" All he said was: "Come and see!" It was said with joy and enthusiasm.

And that is what we do. The invitation is extended to us from "all nations and languages and tongues." And we are welcomed by Him, entirely without prejudice.

 Leighton Thomas

## From the Vicarage...

### ● **Godparents' Sunday – Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May**

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May is the first time that the Church of England has set aside a Sunday to celebrate the wonderful role of Godparenting. We will be celebrating at these Family Services:

- 9.30am @ St Thomas', Goring (for Streatley and Goring families); and
- 11.15am @ St. Andrew's, South Stoke.

We will thank God for all that godparents have contributed already to our journey of faith and pray for their future role. You might like to invite your children's (and your own!) godparents to church. It is also a chance to for those who are godparents or god-children to pray for one another.

A supervised crèche will be available for younger children in Goring, and tea, coffee, squash and biscuits will be served after both services. Everyone is welcome whether they are a godparent or not so I hope you can join us for this special occasion!

### ● **Ascension Day – Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May**

Everyone is invited to this year's Ascension Day Service on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May at 8.00pm at St. Mary's, Streatley. These midweek red letter days can be wonderful occasions as we worship together and often sense the presence of our risen Lord. It will be a communion service and the united choir will lead us.

## ● Baptisms

Please join me in praying for Lola Miles and Florence O'Loughlin who will both be baptised in May in our Benefice.

## ● Goring's experiment in giving

At Goring, we are experimenting with having an offertory bowl by the door where we may contribute our gifts, rather than taking a collection during the service. It can be embarrassing for newcomers to be confronted, without notice, by the collection purse. Helping newcomers to feel comfortable is the real reason for this experiment, so will you help our welcome by noticing the new bowl? Thank you so much.



The plain bowl at the door is for gifts to the parish, whilst the Union Flag bin is for gifts to special collections. And if you are a taxpayer it makes a real difference if you place your gift in a signed Gift Aid envelope so that Henry Parkinson can claim back the tax, thus boosting church income; thank you, Henry.

Thank you so much for your generosity and willingness to change your habits so we may offer a warmer welcome in Jesus' name!



Paul (the Vicar)



### Our Archbishops Justin and John write...

As we travel around the country, we are continuously encouraged by the faithfulness, commitment and courage of all our Partners in the Gospel. Your ministry in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, often in testing circumstances, is an inspiring testimony to the transforming work of our Lord. Like us, you will know that ministry is empty and barren without prayer. That is why we invite you to join us in a week of prayer for the evangelisation of our nation. We long to see a great wave of prayer across our land, throughout the Church.

Our hope is:

- For all Christians to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ;
- For all of us to have confidence to share the Gospel;
- For all to respond to the call of Jesus Christ to follow Him as disciples, to live out the Gospel and to seek God's Kingdom from day to day.

We thank God for our partnership in the Gospel.

Read their full letter at <http://thykingdom.co.uk/>

Join with small groups or wherever you are on the 8<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2016 (except at St Mary's on Wednesday when the church is otherwise engaged); prayers will be said at St Thomas' at noon each weekday. You may find this prayer format helpful:

"So I say to you: ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened." Luke 11:9-10

Start by praying the Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father in heaven... Hallowed be your name...**

Give thanks for who God is and what He gives us; invite sharing of testimony to God's faithfulness.

**Your will be done and your kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven**

- Pray for God's love to direct all of our relationships and conversations where we live and work so that many will encounter Jesus;
- Ask for our homes and churches to become places where more people of all ages discover God's love and mercy.

**Give us today our daily bread**

- Pray for those who are vulnerable in the parish/community to be reached by God's love;
- Ask for God's provision for all those working to bring in His kingdom in the parish/community.

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us**

- Invite confession for the times when we have not reached out with love; when our hearts have been fearful;
- Ask for new boldness to talk about the difference Jesus has made in our lives.

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil**

- Pray into some of the needs of the parish/community;
- Ask God to show you five people to pray for so they may encounter Jesus.

**For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever**

- Pray for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit on His church this Pentecost season;
- Pray that many people will discover the truth about Jesus across our nation.

Pray the Lord's Prayer.

Pray blessings on each other, on every church and every household in your parish/community.

"May the Lord bless you and keep you, The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace." Numbers 6:24-26



**Calling all those who lead, or would like to lead, intercessions in the three churches of the Benefice!**

Our Vicar, Paul Boughton, is running a training session in the preparation and leading of prayers of intercession, which we do on behalf of the whole congregation, during our services.

The session will take place on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June at 8pm in the Canterbury Room. Please note the date in your diary as Paul is very keen that all those who currently lead intercessions in the Benefice are able to attend. If you are not currently an intercessor but think that this may be a way in which you could serve God and His church in contributing to our corporate worship, then please come along to learn more about it too.



The Churchwardens



### Friends of Music at Goring

The second concert in our 2016 series will be given by the Jorgensen Trio on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> May at 1pm. in St. Thomas' church.

The trio has been playing together for four years following completion of their studies at the Royal Academy of Music. In 2015 they were the overall winners of the St. Martin's

Chamber Music Competition, in which they were also awarded the audience prize for the most enjoyable performance. They were also winners of the first prize in the Malta International Competition. They have performed at music festivals across Europe and UK, and have a busy concert programme for 2016 and 2017 including recitals in USA. The trio will be playing Haydn's *Trio in A major*, Schubert's melodious *Trio in Bb major* and two tangos by Piazzolla. See <http://www.jorgensentrio.co.uk/>

Tickets are £12 at the door or £10 if purchased in advance from Inspirations in Goring, or from Nigel Fountain on 873341.



Joan Fountain



### St Mary's Lent Lunches

Thank you to those who hosted and attended our most enjoyable Lent Lunches. They were, in every way, a great success and the total donated was £675 which was "match funded" by the Gatehampton Trust. The sum of £1350 has been sent to the Tear Fund Syria Crisis Appeal.



Tina Farr



### Donations from St Thomas' to local Food Banks

Thank you to everyone who has been making donations to the box in the porch in St Thomas' for local food banks. Our collection arrangements changed recently – items are now going to the foodbank in Wallingford run by *Churches Together* who provide approximately 110 food parcels per month to the less fortunate in the area. Each parcel contains basic food for three days.

Please continue to donate non-perishable items, particularly those listed below. When donating food please ensure that it has an expiry date at least three months ahead.

Bottles of pasta sauce **	Tins of fruit	Sugar
Tins/packets/cartons of pudding	Tins of vegetables	Jams etc
Packets of soup	Tins of spaghetti	Coffee
Packets of dried potato	Tea	Biscuits
Tins of meat or fish	Rice	Cereals
Cartons of UHT/powdered milk	Treats	Long life juice

\*\* The food bank has plenty of pasta, baked beans and tomatoes.

Thank you for your support.



Wendy Middleton



### Streatley Spring Clean

A spring clean of Streatley church will take place on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May at 10am. All offers of help will be much appreciated, the only reward being coffee and camaraderie.



Diana Fenton



### Die Alten Knaben

Die Alten Knaben, an all-male German *a capella* group will be visiting St Mary's, Streatley to give a concert at 19:30pm on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May. They popped into visit the church on their last tour in 2015 and were so enchanted with it that they specially wanted to give a concert here. The concert will be a wonderful collection of sacred arias including works by Schubert, Haydn, Rossini and Poulenc. Tickets, £5 full, £4 concessions, will be available from the start of May in Inspirations or on the door; all proceeds to St Mary's.



Stella



### Happy and Glorious

St Thomas' church flower arrangers are planning floral displays to celebrate the Queen's Official Birthday in June. We shall be paying tribute to Her Majesty as monarch and celebrating her special interests and enthusiasms as an individual. The church will be open at the usual times for visitors to enjoy this floral celebration of a long life of devoted service to our nation. We hope that you will come and see the displays from Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> until Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June. Entry will be free.



Jenny Boyd



### Janet Pound's Piano Recital

Janet gave a magnificent afternoon candlelit piano recital in St Mary's on 17<sup>th</sup> April, including works by J S Bach, Beethoven, Chopin and Debussy, and *Spring Songs* by Grieg, Sinding, Kuramoto and Mendelssohn. Thus the repertoire included pieces from the Baroque period with Bach right up to the present day with Kuramoto. The pieces were all light and spring-like to celebrate the current season.

The concert was very well attended and we were most grateful to Janet for her generous donation of all the ticket money to St Mary's Church. Following the concert, a splendid tea was provided in the Morrell Rooms, organised and run by the Friends of St Mary's; these raised even more money! Thank you especially to Janet, and also to all the willing volunteers who work so hard to make our concerts such a success.



Stella