

**The Parish Magazine of
Whitchurch-on-Thames
and Whitchurch Hill**



FEBRUARY 2002

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A letter from the Reverend Father Peter Jefford

Dear People of the Parish,

As I write this letter to you I know that the Great Festival of the Epiphany is just days away and that Lent will soon start on February 13th 2002. So our minds will be focussed on The Epiphany on January 6th. Next, on the Presentation of Christ in the Temple on February 3rd, and then finally on Christ's Passion when Lent begins on Wednesday, February 13th.

But in these days after Christmas we think back to that First Christmastime and to all the people who then were travellers, and who had travelled to be there:

The Shepherds had to go back from the town of Bethlehem to their flocks on the Bethlehem hills.

But now they were people of knowledge.

The Holy Magi, the Wise Men, who had come from the East had to go all the way back to Southern Persia on their camels. But they were now men of both knowledge and wisdom, for like the shepherds they had seen the Holy child.

They had seen their Infant King.

The Holy Family, fearing both the wrath and the evil intent of King Herod, were also travelling. But in their case as refugees, seeking to find safety in a foreign land, to keep the child both safe and alive. So that perhaps the great gifts of the Magi could become for them currency in a strange land.

Today most of us who travel do so as people on holiday, but in those days they were all travelling as of necessity. In fact we can think of them as the first Christian Pilgrims. So for each of them the journey of necessity had become the journey of understanding

that was to become the journey of faith.

‘Guide me, O thou great redeemer, Pilgrim
through this barren land.’

It has been said by many that since the days of the atrocities of September 11th 2001 that some people are starting to turn to the Faith. That people are beginning to realise that there should be more to life than just shopping and the attendant acquisition of possessions. That if we are here to learn something of the wisdom and the nature of God then we must begin with what has been revealed. We must start at the beginning.

If you are wishing to start out on this journey of faith, to want to make this search at this time, then the best way of understanding the faith is that of a Pilgrim.

‘I am weak, but thou art mighty:
hold me with thy powerful hand.’

That to love and worship God we must begin by being a Pilgrim; to follow in the steps of those who have gone before.

‘Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream doth flow:
Let the fiery cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through.’

So at this time of the Epiphany here are some of the demands that will be made of those who would be pilgrims.

The first is Fortitude: we are told by St Luke that the angel Gabriel said to the Blessed Virgin Mary these words, “DO NOT BE AFRAID.” We are told by St Matthew that the Angel said to Joseph, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife.” And we are told that the Angel said to Joseph “Do not be afraid. For I bring you good news of great joy, which will come to all the people.”

The second is to accept and to believe ‘the

good news of the great joy which will come to all the people’.

And the third is to exercise this Christian faith with humility, with patience, perseverance but, above, all with great joy and endless love.

There is so much to pray for, and so many people to pray for as well. But in the end Pilgrims are called to be people of HOPE.

And hope is what the world needs now.

With my best wishes to you all.

Peter Jefford



A little memory of Southern Africa

I was in the front of the truck helping to navigate coming through the heart of Swaziland, looking for road signs ahead.

And in Africa things are not always what they seem to be.

Ahead there was a great big sign—but a single letter in the sign was missing so that the sign said not DANGER AHEAD but ANGER AHEAD.

Here seemed to me a simple piece of wisdom, of sophistry, that if you take away the D from Danger then you will finish up with the greater peril of Anger.

But we got to our destination!

P.E.J.



NOTICES FROM THE PARISH REGISTER

Holy Matrimony

On January 19th at St Mary’s, Marlon Geoffrey Steward of 32 Cuddington Avenue, Worcester Park, Surrey, to Adele Maria Smyth of 9 Orchard Coombe.



This month’s *Misprints from Church Magazines* have been submitted by Dolby Landen to whom I apologise for spelling his

Donkey's Breakfast

The donkey heard the angels sing
Their tidings of great joy -
"A Saviour born in Bethlehem,
Unto you a Boy."

Although he heard the message
Awake he could not keep.
After a hard day's workload
He drifted back to sleep

On Christmas morning early
To break his fast he tried.
But, trotting to his manger,
He found it occupied.

He gazed down at the Baby,
Swaddled and small, and said
"All creaturely I give my good
To make for you a bed."

Those who give Christ their substance
In any way at all,
Will hear, "Come and have breakfast,"
To them his Easter call.

From earthly need they make their way
And through this earthly strife,
From piercèd Hands take Broken Bread
To feed on risen Life.

And all of Jesus' Easter guests
While seated at his Board
Share the apostle's cry of faith in joy -
"It is the Lord".

H.J. from *The Crucible*
Submitted by Peter Jefford



More misprints

Remember in prayer the many who are
sick of our church and community.

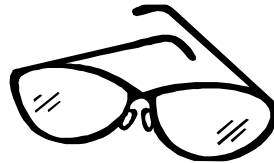
Don't let worry kill you off—let the
church help.

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My Faith by Paul Witcher

What is faith? We are told in the book of Hebrews in the Bible that "Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see". With faith we are able to believe that God is who he says he is, and he will do what he says he will do.

As a youngster I was regularly taken to Church by my parents, and in my teenage years I joined the Church Youth Group, mainly to be with young people of my own age. This is where I met my wife Geraldine. Over the first 16 years of my life I had been told about God and Jesus and I had a reasonable head knowledge of the main stories and events as described in the Bible. At a youth event in the 1960's I was however made aware of the important difference between just having a knowledge of God and Jesus, and actually accepting Jesus into my life as my own personal Lord and Saviour. I realised then that just to have a knowledge of God and the Bible stories was not enough and was not fulfilling.

The Bible describes to us the character of God and is full of God's promises, and I realised that I had to have faith in God to claim and receive those promises for my life. Over the last 35 years I have had a strong faith in God and this faith has sometimes brought great times of happiness and blessing, and also given great strength and comfort during the difficult times. My faith brings me the assurance that even though there may sometimes be difficult times in day to day living, nothing can separate me from the love and the promises of a personal God who cares for me as an individual.



Mothers' Union

We had an excellent visit to Rotherfield Branch last month and enjoyed a very interesting talk about The Langley House Trust and it's wonderful work in the rehabilitation of prisoners.

This month our meeting will be on Thursday, February 28th. at 2.15 p.m. at Abbots Lodge. This will be a Discussion Meeting.

Our Prayer Group will be meeting on Thursday, February

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***Notes on the Church
Calendar***

February

Feasts such as *The
Presentation of Christ in the
Temple* (also this month) are
pretty much self-explanatory.
But what on earth is
Quinquagesima about?

Quinquagesima is also
known as ***Shrove Sunday***,
and comes at the beginning
of the week that contains
Shrove Tuesday ('Pancake
Day') and *Ash Wednesday*.
This year, *Quinquagesima* is
on (date), but since it's
linked to Easter, it's a
moveable feast.

The word itself is
Latin, and means 'fiftieth' –
because this Sunday is more
or less fifty days before
Easter.

Shrove Sunday marks
the beginning of *Shrovetide*:
the three days prior to *Lent*,
when people traditionally
went to confession before
letting their hair down with
all kinds of sports and merry-
making.

Peter Motley

Children's Page

Do you remember the stories about Shimon and Yeshua? We stopped them over Christmas but now it's time to go back to them. But now we have to call Shimon by the new name that Yeshua gave him. He said 'I'm going to call you Peter from now on,' so we'd better do the same.

Yeshua and his friends were on their way to Jerusalem. Lots of other people were travelling too – they were all going for a special celebration, the Passover. It was a bit like Christmas and summer holiday all mixed up together. Peter, who used to be Shimon, was there among the friends. They were all excited. They had been looking forward to the Passover feast for a long time.

But Yeshua had been saying strange things again – things about being killed and coming alive again, and how it all had to happen. It didn't make sense. But Peter had got used to not understanding everything about Yeshua and he'd made up his mind that wherever Yeshua went, Peter was going too. That way nothing bad could happen.

Two of the friends had gone into a nearby village and come back with a young donkey for Yeshua to ride into Jerusalem. They laid their cloak on its back, and Yeshua climbed on. Peter threw his cloak down on the road for the donkey to walk over, then lots of other people did the same and Yeshua rode along a royal carpet. Then

people started waving palm branches and throwing them down too. They were all shouting and praising God, realising who it was riding the donkey and remembering all the wonderful things he had done.

‘Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord’, they sang. ‘Blessed is the King of Israel.’

Peter thought his heart would burst with joy. Yeshua, Peter’s special friend, was being welcomed into Jerusalem as the king he really was. It was a wonderful day.

It’s a day we remember even today. We call it Palm Sunday and it is the Sunday before Easter.

Geraldine Witcher



A Small Village World

If we could shrink the earth’s population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all the existing human ratios remaining the same, it would look something like the following:

There would be:

57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 from the Western Hemisphere north and south and 8 Africans.

52 would be female and 48 would be male.

70 would be non-white, 30 would be white.

70 would be non-Christian, 30 would be Christian.

89 would be heterosexual, 11 would be homosexual.

6 people would possess 59% of the entire of the entire world’s wealth and all 6 would be from the United States.

80 would live in substandard housing, 70 would be unable to read, 50 would suffer from malnutrition, 1 would be near death, 1 would be near birth, only 1 would have a college education and 1 would own a computer.

(Continued on page 17)

St Mary's Choir Robes

In the last issue of the Parish Magazine, we were told that 'any colour or style (for the new choir robes) will be presented to the PCC for their opinions and final choice'.

Quite right and proper. However, the present colour, red, has a particular significance: it can only be used where there is a royal connection to the church in question.

According to Richard Hughes's history of St Mary's, our royal connection is as follows.

'There being no heir to the descendants of Milo Crispin, in 1154 Henry II took possession of the 'honour' of Wallingford. Until 1231, it remained with the crown. Henry III then gave these titles to his brother Richard, Earl of Cornwall. In 1271, Richard was succeeded by his son Edmund. Having no heir, on Edmund's death in 1300 the 'honour' of Wallingford once more reverted to the crown.'

When I asked Richard about this, he said 'Whether that is sufficient to allow red choir robes, I don't know. They were red when I came to Whitchurch (in 1978), and I never questioned it.'

There may, of course, be some other royal connection that we don't know about. But, obviously, someone at some time considered the evidence to be worth taking a chance.

My own feeling is that we should continue with the red – at least until the Queen tells us we can't...

Peter Mottley

LENT LUNCHES

Would those interested in holding (or just going to) a Lent Lunch please contact Jo Adams on 984 3362 as soon as possible please.

Did you know . . .

There is a Scrabble Club in Purley.

We have two meetings a week;

Tuesday evenings - suits those of us who work, and
Thursday afternoons.

We have members of all abilities (even the best of
them started - as we all have - from scratch, so we
offer newcomers advice/coaching, as required).

All our members live in or around Purley and this, we
believe, has helped in creating the club's ethos. We
pride ourselves on our friendliness, helpfulness, and
fair play. Come along to one of our meetings - you
might see someone you know.

Give Ian or Elizabeth a ring on : 0118 9845045
West Berks Scrabble Club



All Churches Together in and around Pangbourne will
be having a March of Witness on Good Friday morning.
Details of time and starting point to follow in next month's
magazine.

Lent Courses: these were held last year, they were well
attended and thought to be very positive in content and in
fellowship across the churches involved. They will be held
again during the week of 18th February. Those interested
need to let the organisers know convenient dates and
times for them to attend so that courses can be held to
suit the majority of people. Tel Tanya Hawley 984 4959



LIFEBOATS – Pangbourne & District Branch

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Whitchurch Hill W.I.

Stan Palling gave us a very interesting talk, accompanied with slides, about Basildon Park and Greys Court. Two National Trust houses, they are local but some of us have never visited them. Mr. Palling is a guide at both of these homes so he has a great interest in them and a lot of information about them.

The raffle was won by Mrs. Pragnell. Arrangements were discussed for going out to a pub lunch.

Our next meeting is 19th February at 10.30am in Goring Heath Parish Hall when the speaker will be Mrs. M Gilson, subject: The History of Women's Clothes. We would welcome new members at our meetings. Just come along—you will be made very welcome.

Pat Turner



Whitchurch and Goring Heath History Society

Our bid for restoration and investigation on the Whitchurch Hill reservoir pumping house has been accepted by the Local Heritage Initiative and we can now go ahead with the work. This involves anything from work with a paint brush, a screwdriver or spade to rummaging around in archives. We would love to hear from anyone who remembers the reservoir in action.

Please contact me on 0118 984 3260

Vicky Jordan

New Priest's Home for Parish

An agreement has been reached for access off the Mill Drive to the proposed site for a new Priest's Home on the rectory grounds. This has been the stumbling block for too long. The Diocesan Office Oxford is now proceeding with the necessary planning steps. Neither the new Priest's Home or the Rectory will have an access to/from the drive leading to the Church.

John Dolby



A Letter From Anne Bolam

Dear Friends of St John's and St Mary's,

I would like to thank you all very much for the attractive, unusual container with bulbs and marbles which you kindly gave me. At present it has pride of place on our window ledge and can be used for many years to come—reminding me of the happy times I have enjoyed during the 12 months I have spent with you.

I have never seen an item like this before and am absolutely delighted with it! The wrapping paper too is very attractive!

On Sunday 20th January my thoughts and prayers will be with you and I do hope that you will soon have someone who can enrich the music at Whitchurch.

If anyone would like to 'pop in' for a cup of tea or coffee when passing my door—do give me a ring, I do hope to maintain friendships with the 'Whitchurch Gang'.

Every good wish to you all.

From Anne.

(Anne's address is 6 Hillview Close, Tilehurst and her Phone number is 942 1020)

*We would like to thank Anne very much indeed for her kind donation to the Choir Robe Fund. **Jo Adams***

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The Accession of The Queen, February 6th 1952

You have now to be very old to have seen the late King, King George VI. I saw him only once in a carriage going up the Strand in London to St Paul's, at the time of the opening of the Festival of Britain. He did not look well but he smiled at us all in the street and that was the only time that I ever saw the King.

Not long after I was in Regent Street in London I the pouring rain and watched the sad procession as the coffin of the late King was being brought back to the Great Hall of the Palace at Westminster.

We had lost our King, but we had gained our new Queen so she became our Queen at her Accession in Africa on February 6th 1952.

There are many things that I could write about the queen; but it does seem to me that the most outstanding of all is her commitment to the value we call loyalty. That she once made a promise to be loyal to all her people; and this promise she has always kept. She has kept this promise to all her people, wherever they are, whoever they are, all around the world.

So we must pray for her especially on that day and on all days. LONG MAY SHE REIGN.

P.E.J.



More misprints

The service will close with "Little Drops of Water". One of the ladies will start quietly and the rest of the congregation will join in.

On Sunday a special collection will be taken to defray the expenses of the new carpet. All those wishing to do something

Officers of the Parish

Officiating Priest:

Reverend Father Peter Jefford
27 Ashlong Road, Headington, Oxford OX3 0NH
01865 760593

Churchwardens:

Alan Matthews, Ashdown, Duchess Close
0118 984 4489
Jo Adams, Windings, Whitchurch Hill
0118 984 3362

Honorary Secretary:

Wendy Ferguson, 21 Swanston Field.
0118 984 1262

Organist and Choirmaster:

Watch this space!

Honorary Treasurer:

Robert Plumb, Uplands Cottage.
0118 984 4838

Assistant Treasurer:

Tony Voysey, Mow Cop, High Street.
0118 984 3946

Captain of the Bellringers:

Stephanie May, 0118 957 2596

Editor, Parish Magazine

Sue Matthews, Ashdown, Duchess Close
0118 984 4489 or email: suematt@waitrose.com

Services for

February

3rd February, The Second Sunday before Lent

St John's 8 a.m. The Holy Communion

St Mary's 10 a.m. Parish Communion

10th February, The Sunday Next Before Lent

St Mary's 8 a.m. The Holy Communion

St Johns 10 a.m. Parish Communion

St Mary's 6 p.m. Evensong

17th February, The First Sunday of Lent

St John's 8 a.m. The Holy Communion

St Mary's 10 a.m. Parish Communion

24th February, The Second Sunday of Lent

St Mary's 8 a.m. The Holy Communion

St John's 10 a.m. Parish Communion

St John's 6 p.m. Evensong

3rd March, The Third Sunday of Lent

St John's 8 a.m. The Holy Communion

St Mary's 10 a.m. Parish Communion