

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



**October 2004**

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## Dear friends in Christ,



We have just been enjoying a wonderful firework display at Hardwick House, thanks to much hard work and planning by a small group of enthusiasts: it was difficult to guess the size of the crowd in the dark, but the turn-out must have run to many hundreds, including a large number of young people and small children. Where did they all come from?

In the same weekend, we had a wedding and a baptism at St Mary's, and were able to offer a welcome to many folk visiting our church for the first time. In mid-September we were visited by walkers and cyclists on the annual "Ride and Stride" event. This month, there will be more special events creating new opportunities for contact with the wider Whitchurch community: for example, the annual Pets' Service and Harvest Thanksgivings in church, and the ever-popular Harvest Supper evening.

Later in the year, we shall have Remembrance Sunday, the Christmas Fair and all the special services for Advent and Christmastide which will draw many visitors for a variety of reasons.

How can we make best use of these chances to communicate Christ to our neighbours? Probably not by banging drums or shaking tambourines! There's no single or simple answer: each occasion is different, and each calls for a different approach. But perhaps there is a unifying principle underlying them all. To communicate Christ, we first have to know Him: we cannot share with others what we do not have ourselves.

So perhaps the real question is how to deepen our own relationship with Christ, how to have a 'closer walk', how to invite Him into his rightful place at the very centre of our lives where He can be always present, always welcoming,

always loving, for us first, and then, through us, for those with whom we come into contact. The natural expression of this glorious intimacy, for which we were created, will then be the outpouring of love and praise and gratitude to God in full-hearted, true worship, which is at once uplifting, attractive, and contagious!

On 23<sup>rd</sup> October we have an exciting opportunity to worship in the company of Christians from across the county, at “Celebration Praise!” a day of exploration built around a celebration of the Eucharist with Bishop Colin, offering a rich choice of over 30 workshops on subjects from worship with the Book of Common Prayer and the Bible, through Taize and Iona worship, to “Godly Play”, movement and Art in worship, the celebration of work in worship, worship in small rural churches, and many more.

This is too good to miss, and important for our future life and growth. To get the full benefit for the parish, we need to bring a good-sized contingent so that between us we can take part in as many of the workshops as possible. (Because there are just two workshop sessions during the day). I can offer seats in my car and will gladly co-ordinate lifts to the event. This could be our “Woodstock”, as significant for us as that other seminal weekend event in the 60s. Do please come along, and encourage others to join you.

Finally, please note the announcement elsewhere in the magazine about the revival of the Ladies’ Bible Study group organized by Geraldine Witcher, and please also remember that the Prayer Group led by Rosemary Pearce continues to meet monthly in St Mary’s and welcomes new members.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter", with a horizontal line underneath.

PARISH REGISTERS

**Holy Baptism:**

Hugo Charles Napier-Munn (grandson of Mrs Elizabeth Napier-Munn, of Duchess Close) at St Mary's

*Sprinkle down upon him Thy grace, give Thou to him virtue and growth. AMEN*

**Holy Matrimony:**

Helen Smith, daughter of Mr & Mrs Peter Smith of Eastfield Lane,  
to Robert Scurr at St Mary's on 4<sup>th</sup> September

Debbie Scobie, daughter of Mr & Mrs Kenneth Scobie of Path Hill, to Will Davies at St Mary's on 18<sup>th</sup> September.

*Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts and a crown upon their heads. AMEN*

**Funeral RIP**

Anne Louise Kopec of Goffs Clump, Crays Pond, died 9th Sept at Duchess of Kent House, aged 62, service at St Mary's followed by burial at St John's, 20th September.

*Rest eternal grant unto her O Lord, let light perpetual shine upon her. AMEN*



**Mothers Union**

Our next meeting will be held in the Peppard Parish Room on Tuesday, Oct.19th. at 2.30p.m. when the speaker will be Peter Teague talking about how to become a Diocesan Member. With the closure of the branch coming in January many of us are likely to want to change to this kind of membership.

*Mary Kent*

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### **Who we are**

Englefield Garden Centre is part of TACT, a **charity** providing training & therapy to people with learning disabilities

### OCTOBER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

Sat 2nd at 9.30 am: Prayer Group meets in St Mary's

Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2.30 pm: Wedding of Sarah Matthews to Giles Taylor at St John's (Organ and Choir)

Sun 3rd at 10am: Pets Service at St Mary's

Sun 10th at 10am: Harvest Thanksgiving at St John the Baptist

Sat 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Harvest Supper, Pangbourne Village Hall

Sun 17<sup>th</sup> at 10am: Harvest Thanksgiving at St Mary's

Sat 23<sup>rd</sup> from 9.45 am to 4pm: Celebration Praise! ecumenical day of worship at The Marlborough School, Woodstock

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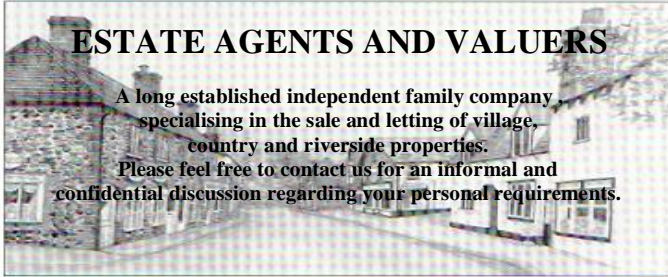
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### **The Rector's Letter for October.**

I face a dilemma in writing this article. It is one faced by news editors every day all across the world. The dilemma is this: how long is it before something becomes old news?

I want to write about the appalling tragedy of the murder of over three hundred hostages at the school in Beslan, in southern Russia. For me, today, this news is fresh, relevant, and the horror is very close to home – we live next door to a school. But for you, reading this at least three weeks (maybe more) in the future, how will it be?

Certainly the news media will have moved on.

But will you have also started to forget?

I hope not, but I do not ask for your forgiveness for reminding you of it.

Two and a half thousand years ago the prophet Jeremiah wept for his nation as it refused to accept the error of its ways. He foresaw the coming destruction of Judah by a neighbouring superpower.

The small local men of power were to be swept away – with God’s blessing.

Judah was no longer to enjoy God’s protection because she had turned away from God and his law.

*“The people have provoked me, by the evil they have done, they, their leaders, their priests.*

*They have turned their backs to me, and not their faces... they would not listen or respond to discipline.*

*They set up idols in my Holy Place....*

*They sacrifice their sons and daughters to the god of death, though I never commanded, nor did it enter my mind, that they should do such a detestable thing.”*

(Jer 32:30-35, abbrev.)

From this text I hope you can see that the current Islamic cult of suicide bombing, or “sacred martyrdom” is anathema to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. These people, in the name of God, have actually made death into a god, and are thus committing idolatry. Those who send them do not act in accordance with God’s will, and their claims to be doing so are lies.

Whatever the real reason for the Chechen uprising, and their motivations for targeting civilians and children, their actions are more likely to bring down the wrath of Russia on their heads. Judah was destroyed as a nation in 586 BC, when Babylon finally lost patience with her “non-compliance”. Her cities were razed, and her people carried off into exile, to work as slave labourers in an alien culture. Jeremiah’s word from the Lord was proved right.

Chechnya and her people should beware a similar judgment.

Your Rector ***Kevin Davies***

# Children's Page

## THINGS JESUS DID

### 3. Broke the rules

Sometimes we know that obeying the rules is very important. If everyone drove through red traffic lights there would soon be no one left to drive at all! If we talked and ran around all the time in school instead of listening and working, the teachers would get very tired and we wouldn't learn anything at all. Rules about how we behave in school and in society are important.

But some 'rules' are not really rules and are meant to be broken. There was one like that in Jesus' time. The rule said that the only people Jewish men (which Jesus was) should talk to were other Jewish men – no women, no foreigners and definitely no one who wasn't a 'good' person. But Jesus didn't think that was a good rule. He had come from God to show that God loves everyone – women and foreigners and 'bad' people as well as good law keeping Jewish men.

So, one day, he was hot and tired and sitting beside the well and a foreign, not very good woman came up to the well to get water.

'Give me something to drink,' Jesus said to her.

The woman looked at him in amazement.

'How can you ask me for a drink?' she said. 'Everyone knows Jews hate Samaritans.'

'If you knew who I really am,' Jesus replied, 'you'd be asking me for water. I give water that means you'd never be thirsty again.'

'You don't have a bucket and the well is very deep,' she retorted. 'How could you give me water?'

'The water I give is like a spring bubbling up and bringing eternal life.' Jesus replied, smiling at her.

By now the woman realized that Jesus wasn't talking about the water in the well, but about something much more important. They carried on talking and she began to realize that he was God's Son and was telling her about how to be a true worshipper of God. She was so excited that she wanted to rush back into her village and bring everyone else to talk to him.

Just then Jesus' friends arrived. They had been buying food and were bringing it back so Jesus could have some too. They were amazed – and horrified – to see him talking to a woman. But not one of them dared ask him why. They were beginning to realize something too – they were beginning to realize that following Jesus and being his friend sometimes meant doing things they wouldn't usually even think of doing. And sometimes the thing he did upset the 'good' people. But they could see how excited and happy the woman was – and the rest of the villagers. They knew that Jesus broke the 'rules' for a very good reason.

(Jesus still breaks the rules and he still expects us to include the poor and the foreign and the stranger. So, if there's someone at school who has no friends, he'd like us to be friends with them. If there's something we can do to help people less blessed than us, he wants us to do it! His kingdom still turns the world's values upside down and inside out. The living water he gives bubbles up in his followers bringing joy and new life wherever it flows. Let's let it flow through us!)

*Geraldine Witcher*

## **Ladies' Bible Study**

We are a group of ladies who try to meet fortnightly in term time for coffee, a chat and a time of informal bible study. If anyone would like to join us, we'd love for you to become part of our group.

Time: 2 pm (for about one hour)

Dates: Alternate Fridays starting on October 1<sup>st</sup>

Venue: Shepherds Close, Hardwick Road

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## 21<sup>st</sup> Late Summer Show

This was held in The Barn, Beech Road on 11<sup>th</sup> September and was probably the most successful Show the Society has held. The number of entries (229) was the highest since 1992. The judges in all sections commented on the good quality exhibits and in particular the very high standard of some exhibits. Despite the very wet weather of the last few weeks, the exhibitors put on a good display of vegetables, flowers and fruit and it was very pleasing to see the Floral Art Section so well supported. We wish to thank exhibitors, judges and all who helped as stewards and to set up and dismantle tables at the Show and make it a success. It was also very pleasing to see many people viewing the exhibits. The trophies were presented by Mr. D. Betts, Chairman of Purley Parish Council.

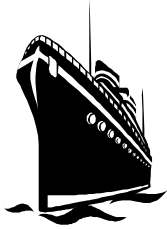
## Winter Talks

Our first talk will be on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> October in Purley Memorial Hall commencing at 8 p.m. Dr. M. Keith Lucas will give a slide show and talk on the "Natural History of the Shetland Islands". Please try and come along so that we have a good attendance for our speaker.

The Shed in the Memorial Hall car park will be closing on Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> October for the winter and re-opening the first week-end in February 2005. We hope you have all purchased your bulbs and any other gardening requirements you may need whilst we are closed. The Shed now stocks bird food, so please make sure you have ample food for the birds during the winter months.

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## **How do you fancy 'A Night on the Tiles'?**

October brings WADS comedy once again to Woodcote Village Hall. Frank Vickery's 'A Night on the Tiles' has all the ingredients of a hilarious evening out. Gareth and Shirley's wedding day dawns to a somewhat inauspicious start. Gareth has a post stag-night hangover, his bride is three months pregnant and Grandad is confused after getting stranded in the outside loo, wondering whether Shirley is marrying Gareth or his good looking brother Kenneth. You may not be surprised that relations between Gareth, Kenneth and Shirley became somewhat strained and on the night when the baby is born, Kenneth overhears some shattering news...! Do come to see what happens and enjoy the fun.

Performances start at 7.45pm on 14th, 15th and 16th October in the Village Hall. The box office is open on 01491 680556

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# Services for . . . .

## October

### 3rd October, 17th After Trinity

St John's	8 a.m.	Holy Communion
St Mary's	10 a.m.	<b>Pets Service</b> followed by
	11.30 am	Said Eucharist

### 10th October 18th after Trinity

St Mary's	8 a.m.	Holy Communion
St John's	10 a.m.	<b>Harvest Thanksgiving</b>
St Mary's	6 p.m.	Evening Prayer

### 17th October, 19th after Trinity

St John's	8 a.m.	Holy Communion
St Mary's	10 a.m.	<b>Harvest Thanksgiving</b>

Holy Communion at Eastfield House at 11:30 a.m.

### 24th October, Last after Trinity Bible Sunday

St Mary's	8 a.m.	Holy Communion Revd John Evans
St John's	10 a.m.	Parish Communion Revd John Evans
St Mary's	6 p.m.	Evening Prayer