

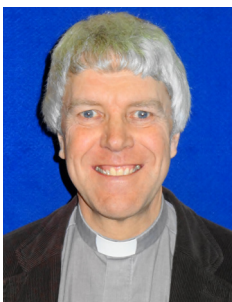
# St James Church Magazine



March - May 2016 Edition

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## Commitment

- Worship weekly
- Be part of a small group
- Offer for service in a team
- Give financially

That is commitment to your local church in a nutshell. But I hear you saying:

What about all our other commitments; surely we need to balance them out? There are family, friends, health pursuits, chores, holidays... and especially the all-consuming work. Not to mention leisure, time for 'me'. Anyway, doesn't God want me to be spending more time out in the world rather than doing more churchy stuff?

The answer is, 'No, he wants both!' Weekly worship is really important. Not for what you get out of it – that's a secondary by-product which happens sometimes – but for what you mean to others and to God by gathering with his people, the church. Of course, we then need to ensure we provide a range of weekly services at times which people can manage, because not everyone can make 10.30 on a Sunday morning. And St James' is of course not the only church! But our human nature does mean we need to take stock of our (NB not others') commitment to regular worship; it's easy for our excuses to sound so plausible that we convince ourselves it doesn't matter.

Actually it does matter – for you, others and God. If you / your family are not part of the church one Sunday (or weekday service) you are not available to God for those opportunities he sets up where you are just the right person to encourage a person new to faith. Also you are not contributing to the 'critical mass' of people needed for others to feel comfortable in worship: some of you will have had the experience of being the only family in church, or the only person feeling tearful, or whatever, and will know that the experience is not conducive to returning for worship especially if we are talking about someone new to church.

Our church statistics show that more than half of our regular members join in worship fewer than half the Sundays in the year. So while we have 194 regular adult worshippers, in any week we can expect to see a varying 130 or so. That's perfectly viable and feels OK, so I'm not saying this as a way to boost the numbers at St James'; I am just challenging you to assess your own commitment, for the sake of your spiritual wellbeing and God's work. I recently went to a church where the minister said 'Vicars normally get six Sundays off a year; that's a reasonable yardstick for church members too'.

So why is commitment to worship so important? Because the church is God's only plan for saving the world and giving eternal life! OK, it is our personal faith in Christ which saves us eternally; but there is a much closer identity between the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and the church than we sometimes realise. An individual believer who shuns church membership (and institutions get a bad press at the moment, so there's an easy excuse) cannot actually be sure of their true status with God because they have only their own human feelings and beliefs to rely on. These can vary, even be delusional. Also the enemy will soon cause doubts and weaken the individual faith.

So God has provided a means whereby Christ can exist on earth – in his body of people – so that together we overcome our individual shortcomings. It is through his body that the world will be changed, rescued, and more individuals brought to safety.

You are immensely precious to God your creator and redeemer. Your faith is the most important gift you can ever receive – more than your health, your family, your friends, your finances. Not giving you or your family treats, or meeting up less frequently will not harm them or you; not participating in the body of Christ will certainly harm you - and the others whom God wants you to be alongside in worship and service. Your friends or family will respect that, and it might even make them think... and children will grow up knowing the eternal priorities.

I have only covered one of the points at the start – but just to note quickly that service in a team could well be outside church itself: chaplaincy, debt advice, volunteering in a Christian charity, Besom, Street Pastors, and many more. Or it could be to serve the body of people making up the church, in coffee-making and serving, welcoming, technics, music and a host of other things in order to allow worship to happen.

And a small group is really important pastorally: in a church the size of ours one paid pastor could not hope to provide for everyone, and in any case this is wrong model – it should be a question of releasing mutual giftings, not assuming that one or two of those gifts reside in the professionals.

I am really not trying to make you feel guilty; but since it is Lent as I write this I do want you to take stock before God, and realise how important you are to him and his body. If he is prompting you, then respond not out of guilt but out of thanksgiving and love.

Let's keep this conversation going. Have a look at and listen to my sermon on Valentine's Day ([www.stjamestaunton.co.uk](http://www.stjamestaunton.co.uk)) for more on this. Geoff Treasure is also hoping to produce a booklet about commitment in its wider sense – copies available soon.

God bless,  
Tim





## 2016 March parish magazine article

Bishop Peter reminded us last month of the hope we have in the God of promises as we look to uncertain futures. We can trust God to remain faithful and immovable whatever our circumstances. Easter has always been a moveable feast although the Archbishop is now taking soundings from other church leaders to see whether we can 'fix a date' for Easter. I wonder how easy that will be!

We are now part way through Lent and the first Sunday of **this** March is Mothering Sunday which is celebrated on the fourth Sunday of Lent. This was traditionally the day when people would gather to worship, to 'rejoice' ('laetare'), at their 'mother' church, a large local church or often the Cathedral. As this practice developed so those in service would have the opportunity for a short holiday, to return to their homes, to their mothers, often bringing small presents or gifts. It was a welcome moment of festivity in the season of abstinence and austerity. A sign of things to come...

However for some of us, Mothering Sunday can be the most painful day of the year as we remember the loss of a loving parent, whether known or not; or the bereavement of never having been able to be a parent oneself; or the death of a child we have loved and longed for. It can mean that some find it too difficult to be in church that week. Perhaps as we approach Good Friday it gives us a small insight of what it might mean to have been Mary watching her Son die on that cross.

So how about a different take on Mothering Sunday this year? We might focus on remembering those who have 'given birth' to us by inspiring our faith or where we ourselves have played a part in someone else's discovery of Jesus as a friend and Saviour. Who might you remember, give thanks for and pray for?

+ Ruth Taunton



### **An old recipe for those aches and pains**

I have a friend who has suffered from arthritis for a number of years and it has become very painful. She has taken an old recipe, that her mother use to take and it has really helped so i thought I would pass it on. I don't have arthritis but i do have various aches and pains, so here it is; One teaspoon of Cyder Vinegar, one teaspoon of clear runny honey in a small glass of warm water can be taken up to three times a day.

Jenny Edmonds

# VOICE

I really wanted to share with you all what an awesome first term that we have had restarting Voice again. Since September Voice has been on Friday evenings at St. Mary Magdalene church. It is a combination of St. Mary Magdalene children's choir and some of St. James' young people. We meet after they have their choir practise. We normally start with some time to catch up over food and hot chocolate and play some games. Then we split into two groups; the older ones with me and Rod (vicar of St. Marys) and the younger ones with Ant (TYfC's youth worker). In these groups we explore topics that they pick. This term the older group have been looking at the Old Testament as a whole. We have started off looking how it fits in with the New Testament and will go on to look aspects and passages that arise!

It has been an absolute privilege to get to know all of the young people that come. The young people have grown into a close knit group despite the group being a combination of young people from all over Taunton and the two churches.

It would be fabulous if you could pray for Voice.

- ☐ Particularly for all of the young people that attend that they will grow in their faith, confidence in themselves and know the unfailing love that Our Father has for them.
- ☐ I am really excited for it to grow and develop in the future! In order for Voice to continue and expand, please pray that God will prompt new leaders to join the team.

Thank you for all those that have already been praying and supporting Voice!

Clare

If you are reading this and are or know someone who is between the ages of 10-16 who doesn't already come... You are VERY welcome! Please see me after church or get in contact for more details [clare\\_sykes@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:clare_sykes@hotmail.co.uk)

# INTRODUCING.....

**Richard and Sue Lucas** have been part of the St. James family for many years. It was a case of North meets south when Sue moved from Cheshire in 1979 to take up her first teaching post at Parkfield School. They met through their mutual interest in drama, while performing in the Thespians' production of *A Worms Eye View*, when Sue replaced the female lead, who had just dropped out. There followed a romance that led to them marrying a year later in 1984.



Both had been brought up in Christian families. Sue's family had a strong Christian tradition, but it was at university, she became more fully aware of knowing God personally, and made her own commitment to Jesus. Richard's mother and brother were active members of West Buckland church and he attended Wellington School which had a Christian tradition. Though he stopped 'doing church' at 12, there has never been a time in his life that he did not believe in God and something beyond. He resumed Church again when he was asked to become a server. He then attended a youth group, and through that experienced some exciting times in the 1970s, when worship through groups like Riding Lights and Christian rock performers provided a challenge and excitement for teenage Christians. His journey in faith took a step forward after he had come back from studying horticulture at Cannington College. He agreed to steward at the Good News Crusade when it came to Taunton. Despite his antipathy to the "tub-thumping, American telly evangelist style", God's grace won through and he found himself going forward at the appeal. It was however the follow up group that happened afterwards, which continued for the next 6 years that helped develop and grow his faith.

Richard has always had an interest in drama and music, and has performed in pantomimes and musicals from an early age. He initially worked in the family nursery business, which his brother now runs, but then moved into retail and then ended up running his own shop, Parrots, in the High Street – a shop full of unusual knickknacks at temptingly affordable prices. (Some of you may remember the Millennium New Year's Party at Parrots.) That phase ended in 2001 when he went to train as a Further Education teacher, and subsequently went on to set up a centre at Bridgwater College for young people who have difficulties in managing in mainstream schools. Sue continued to teach children at the other end of the age group at Parkfield School. Their joint interest in Drama had to take a bit of a back seat, as they established their family and careers, although Sue continued for a time in the drama team at St. James called Grassroots and they both performed in *Half a Sixpence* in 1986 and Richard continued with sporadic outings with Taunton Amateur Operatic Society – with a pair of gold shorts.

They have experienced worshipping in different settings, which has given them an appreciation that as Christians we are all part of God's family. Being members of St. James has been a significant part of their journey as a family. They have two daughters, Charlotte and Hannah, who are now adults and who many will remember as part of our church family. Charlotte has followed her parents into schools work as a teaching assistant and Hannah is in her third year of a performing arts course in Cambridge.

In addition to being a mum and teacher, Sue has long had a passionate concern to advocate for adoption and along with others set up a group called **Asist** aimed at supporting and advocating for a stronger voice for adoptive families. In the course of her involvement Sue has come into contact with Martin Narey, the Government Adoption tsar and Government Ministers, including Edward Timpson, Minister for Children and Families. She has provided evidence to select committees and more recently became a Trustee for the south west adoption agency Families for Children. She is also involved with Home for Good, a Christian organisation which seeks to encourage and develop understanding of how churches can support foster carers and adopters. For the last few years she has moved to working with even younger children as Head of the Nursery at St. James Church School, with up to 100 children attending, a large proportion coming from non-English speaking families. That is a story in itself, and full of challenges each day. Do ask her about her work there.

They both have demanding jobs and Richard has recently become Assistant Head in the South Somerset Partnership School (another story in itself). In his spare time (!) he is our Worship Coordinator, working with Ray, our music director, musicians and singers who help lead our congregational worship. Richard feels very strongly that there has been a shift towards the presentation of the gospel through song; the story of God's love is presented in the songs we sing. There is now a greater variety of songs available offering both praise and worship and The Gospel Message. The service on a Sunday is able to set the tone of what the church feels like beyond the service. Indeed, the services are the shop window for the church. The Worship team, is there to enable church as it gathers together for worship, to participate in praise, worship and learning. While Richard is encouraging his team in this vision for the Church, Sue has an equally important role in the prayer ministry. She has a quiet ability to discern when someone is needing prayer support and an ability to come alongside.

When this interview was being given, Sue was unfortunately unwell and not able to be there, so this only gives a tantalising glimpse of her journey of faith. When I asked Richard what his faith meant to him he said – "It helps me make sense of the muddle, it gives a meaning and a purpose in life and it makes the difference" – in a world that is so full of confusion and contradictions that makes a lot of sense. Confidence of what we hope for and assurance of what we cannot see (Hebrews 11:1).

# TEAR Fund's Big Bake



At St. James, one of the international aid organisations that we support is Tearfund (The Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund); it is a leading relief and development charity, working in partnership with Christian agencies and churches worldwide to tackle the causes and effects of poverty and injustice. It started during the Cold War in the 1960s as a spontaneous response by Christians to the plight of 40 million people who became refugees as a result of war and disasters.

Today, as at the start, Tearfund is driven by God's relentless love to reach out to those suffering in poverty and distress. As an organisation it seeks to respond to natural or humanitarian disasters, often working with local churches and partner organisations throughout the world. To see the scope of the work you can visit their website and read accounts of their impact on communities and individual lives at <http://www.tearfund.org>

Tearfund also seeks to raise awareness of issues that are affecting people in different parts of the world, campaigning against poverty, injustice and human suffering. One such is the **No Child Taken** anti-trafficking campaign. People trafficking is one of the fastest growing crimes in the world and shatters the lives of 1.2 million





children every year. Families are tricked into believing that their children will be paid good wages, enabling them to support their family. Instead children are lured away from their homes and end up working with no money ever being paid. Children like 14 year old Nazeeb who worked 21 hours a day in a factory hundreds of miles from his home. Many other children are sold to traffickers at a much younger age. Tear Fund works with local Christian organisations to raise awareness and provide self-help income generating schemes to prevent families being lured into selling their children to people traffickers

On 31<sup>st</sup> January, St James Sunday Club participated in the Tearfund Big Bake and with your help were able to raise £377 for the No Child Taken campaign. **WELL DONE SUNDAY CLUBBERS.**

Here are a few photos taken of the event, where the young people and their leaders turned bakers to produce some mouth-watering treats for their after church customers in the Hall to publicise the No Child Taken campaign.





# BEHIND THE SCENES.....

## The Treasurer's team

Ever wondered what happens after you put your collection in the plate on a Sunday or you pay your standing order payment to support the work of St. James Church? Dealing with the finances is one of the biggest roles in the church, so it's not surprising that it requires a team of people all working together to keep the church's finances ticking over. So who are the team?



**Richard Sainsbury** is the Treasurer, and has overall responsibility for overseeing our financial affairs. He manages the church accounts, deals with the bank, prepares the bi-monthly reports to the PCC, pays the bills and expenses claims when they come in, presents the annual budget and generally ensure that decisions involving expenditure are within our means and that we remain solvent. He is supported by his

wife **Jacqui** who has a great eye for detail, which is a huge asset when reconciling all different figures as they are pulled together.



**Richard Taylor** is the Stewardship secretary, who has the task of helping explain to church members how they can most effectively give to the church as part of their Christian responsibility. This includes the Stewardship scheme which enables those of us who pay tax to give in tax efficient way and enables the church to reclaim the tax you have paid. He can also provide information on legacy giving, not something we always want to think about perhaps, but well worth considering.

**Chris Rickard**, with her professional expertise as a Payroll officer, deals with wages and returns that have to be made. She can be found once a month in the church office keeping HMRC happy with us.



**Karen Gamblen**, our administrator, spends a lot of her time in the office, taking bookings for our halls, sending out invoices and collecting the bills and invoices from a wide range of people, whose services we need. These she gladly passes on to Richard S for payment. **Tina Andrews**, who was our previous Treasurer, and with her husband **Les**, carried out all the Treasurer's roles for many years. Initially she provided a mentoring role when she handed over the job three years ago is still is available for advice and further helps by preparing money for deposit each week.

All of these people, contribute a great deal of time and effort to their roles, which they carry out meticulously and with complete confidentiality and discretion. It is a big responsibility and vital for the mission of our church.

To keep a church like St. James going requires a lot of financial support and it mainly has to come from you, the congregation. Over half our income is paid to the Diocese, in return for which they provide us with our Vicar and a whole range of support services, training, advisory personnel and it also helps to support parish ministry in areas where churches are less able to pay their way. The rest of our income is spent on our ministry in this parish, maintaining the building, heating and fuel bills, wages, cleaning materials, evangelism, children's work, equipment, etc etc. We also give a proportion of our income to missions that we support, both locally and internationally. If you want to know more about what we do make sure that you read the annual report and come to the Annual Parish Meeting in April. We have very few paid staff in our church, but we are enormously blessed in having a lots of volunteers who take on a range of responsibilities, and give their time generously and freely, but the more we carry out our mission in the town, the more we need to manage our financial resources.

Thank you Richard, Richard, Chris, Karen, Tina and Jacqui for keeping us on the right track.



## **St James: A Home for Good Church**

Every day approximately 50 children are taken into care in the UK. They are removed from chaotic, traumatic, abusive, neglectful or desperate situations. Some need a home in an emergency, some a temporary home until they can return to their families, some need an occasional home to give their families a break, some need a home for good with a new forever family.

Home for Good is a charity aiming to make adoption and fostering a significant part of the life and ministry of the Church in the UK. It raises the awareness of the need for adoptive and fostering parents, encouraging families to provide a loving home for the children in care and equipping the church to offer welcoming, supportive communities for them.

Home for Good is child focused, faith rooted and always searching for creative and new approaches. It celebrates diversity, respects differences and is generous with its ideas.

The church can be a source of tremendous support to adoptive parents, foster carers and kinship carers as well as to birth families who may need that little bit of extra support.

It can be tricky knowing how to support these families but God's concern for orphans and the fatherless is explicitly stated at least 40 times in the Bible. Psalm 82:3 exhorts God's people to "defend the weak and fatherless" and James 1:27 "religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this, to look after orphans and widows in their distress".

Christians have the assurance that God has seen our need and chosen to adopt us into his family Ephesians 1: 5

St James already has a history of recognising those in our congregation who adopt or foster. We value and welcome all parents, carers and

children in the church. Last month the PCC agreed to register St James as a Home for Good Church. I (Sheila Marlow) am the nominated representative. I was accepted as a Home for Good Champion by the Home for Good charity several months ago.

As such anyone who contacts Home for Good and needs support or advice on adoption or fostering care in the Somerset area will be put in contact with myself and I will endeavour to support them and their local church, as well as signposting them to organisations that can help.

But congregations themselves can offer support. They can offer practical care such as babysitting, ironing, acting as back up in an emergency, providing references for those considering adopting or fostering, being a listening ear while maintaining confidentiality, just having a cup of coffee. Caring for any child can be a difficult business.

What about St James:

Fostering and adoption is not for everyone but we can help in other ways.

Besides the things already mentioned we can pray regularly for all those children in need and for all their carers.

We can pray for the charity Home for Good which is working hard to help local authorities and agencies find suitable adopters and foster carers so that no child goes through life without a “ forever family”.

As a charity Home for Good relies on donations so can we help with fundraising?

Can we spread the word to other churches and communities in our area?

And finally I thank you all for the support I received as a foster carer from my family at St James. And thank you to the PCC for agreeing to become a Home for Good Church.

**Thursday 3rd March**  
**TALES FROM A**  
**SOMERSET COUNTRY COPPER**

**2.00pm** Join our Thursday Fellowship group with a special guest speaker

**Friday 4th March**  
**“MURDER IS SERVED”**  
**MURDER MYSTERY EVENING**

**7.15pm** A two course meal and coffee.  
Murder Mystery in aid of RAfT

**Sunday 6th March**  
**MOTHERING SUNDAY**

**10.30am** All Age Worship Service

**Sunday 20th March**  
**PALM SUNDAY**

**10.30am** All Age worship with the  
EASTER EXPERIENCE TEAM followed by  
a Bring and Share lunch in the Hall.



**Thursday 24th March**  
**MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE**

**7.00pm** Shared meal with communion

**Friday 25th March**  
**GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE**

**10.30am** Worship followed by a Walk  
of Witness in the Town

**AN HOUR AT THE CROSS**

**2.00pm** Spend an hour at the Cross

**Sunday 27th March**  
**EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE**

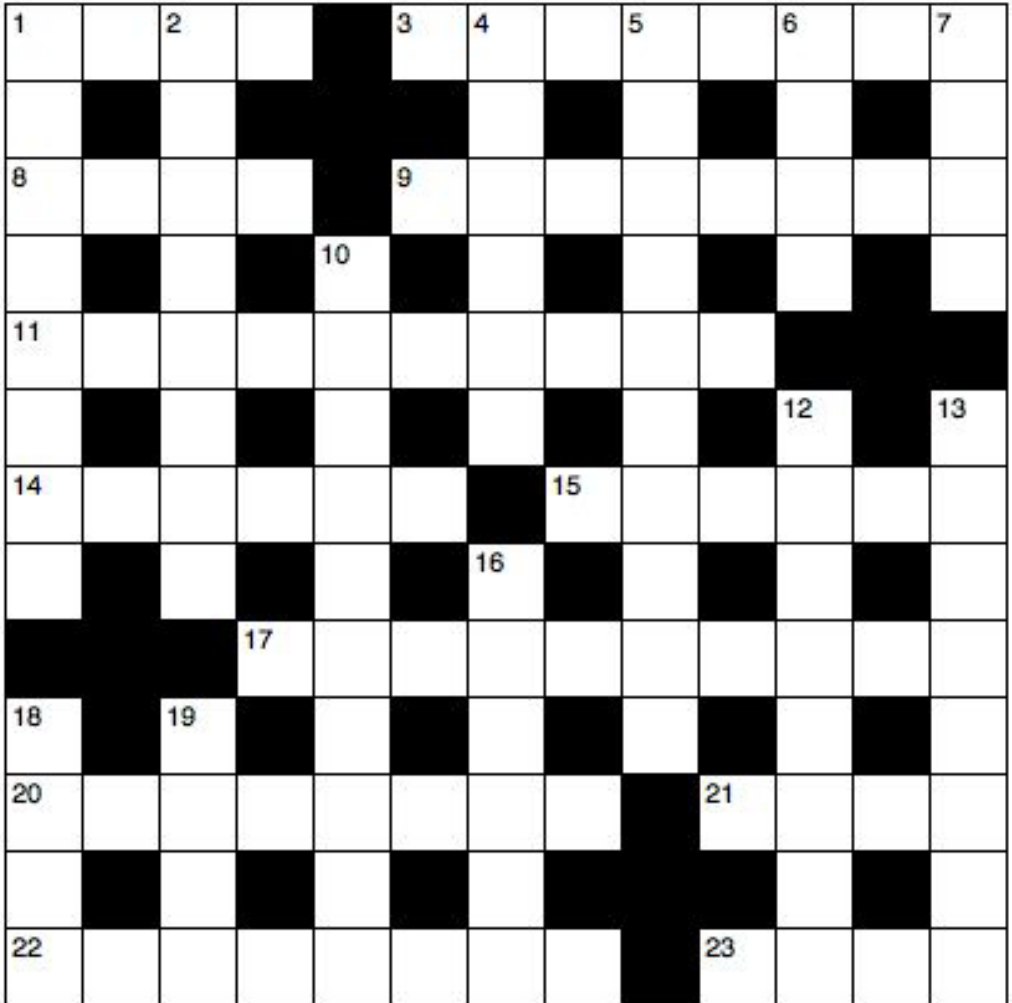
**10.30am** Family Holy Communion

**Monday 28th March**  
**BANK HOLIDAY RAMBLE**

**10.00am** Meet at Church for a walk on  
the hills. (Details to follow in the Bulletin)

**Thursday 7th April**  
**THE WORK OF THE GIDEONS**  
**2.30pm** Thursday Fellowship

# CROSSWORD



Answers to Crossword can be found on page 31

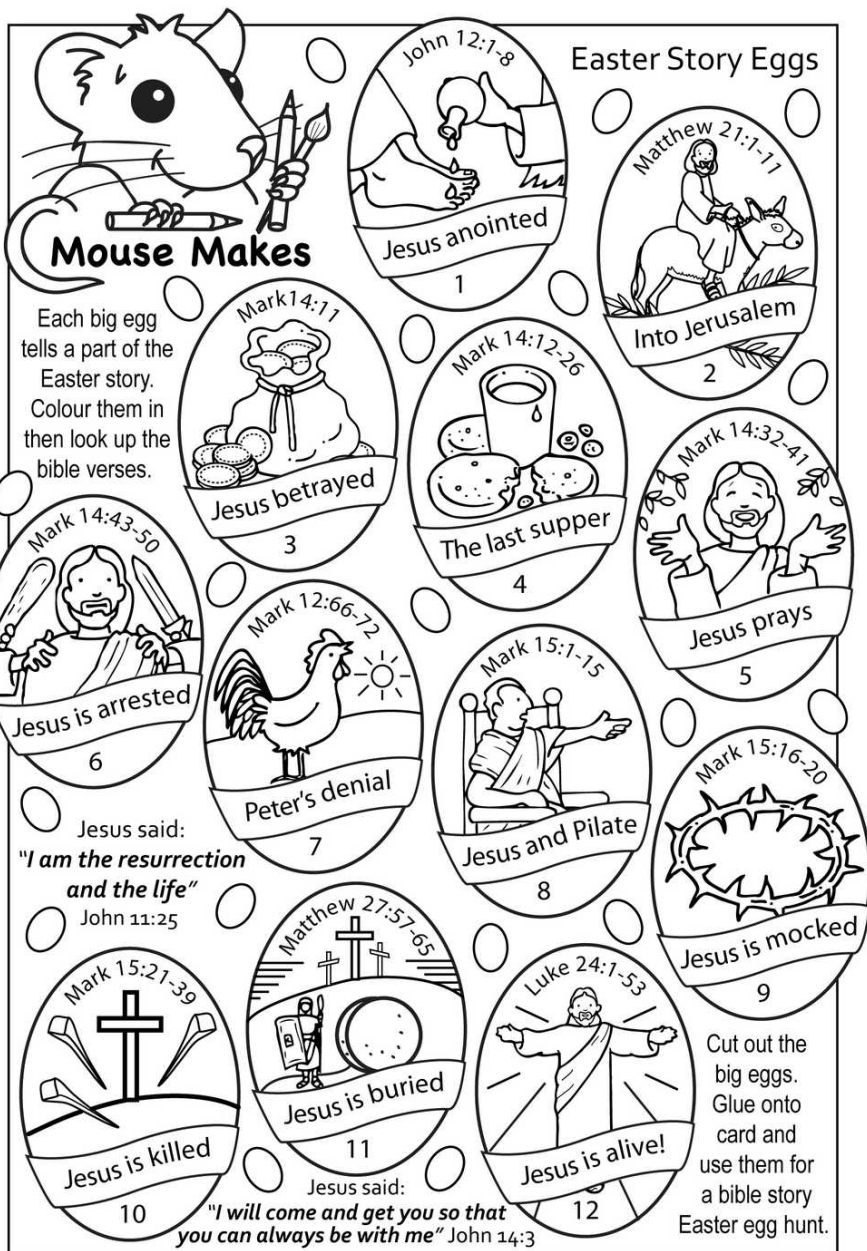


## Across

- 1 Made from the fruit of the vine, symbol of the blood of Christ (4)
- 3 'You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don't go very far from it. All of you be on — — ' (Joshua 8:4) (3,5)
- 8 Seep (4)
- 9 Celebrated by Jesus on the night of his betrayal (Luke 22:15) (8)
- 11 One of the supposed sites of Christ's burial place in Jerusalem (6,4)
- 14 'A city on a hill — be hidden' (Matthew 5:14) (6)
- 15 He inherited Elijah's mantle (2 Kings 2:12-13) (6)
- 17 Where Jesus prayed 'Not as I will, but as you will' (Matthew 26:36, 39) (10)
- 20 'Only in his home town and in his — — is a prophet without honour' (Matthew 13:57) (3,5)
- 21 Sail (anag.) (4)
- 22 How Jesus was punished before his crucifixion (Matthew 27:26) (8)
- 23 Eye sore (4)

## Down

- 1 Can't grow (anag.) (5,3)
- 2 A servant girl to Peter, 'You also were with that — , Jesus' (Mark 14:67) (8)
- 4 Well-being (Proverbs 3:8) (6)
- 5 Pentecostal denomination, — of God (10)
- 6 One of the 'obvious' acts of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19, 21) (4)
- 7 'I preached that they should repent and — to God' (Acts 26:20) (4)
- 10 ' — — , the world will not see me any more, but you will see me' (John 14:19) (6,4)
- 12 He betrayed Jesus: Judas — (Luke 6:16) (8)
- 13 Jesus to Peter: ' — — of my sheep' (John 21:16) (4,4)
- 16 The centurion said, 'Surely this man was — — of God' (Mark 15:39) (3,3)
- 18 Baked bread (Mark 8:14) (4)
- 19 'Blessing and honour, glory and power, be — Him' (Handel's Messiah) (4)





## HOLY WEEK

Holy Week is the week before Easter Day; it starts with Palm Sunday which is on 20th March this year. Palm Sunday is when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey.



The Thursday of Holy Week is called Maundy Thursday which is named for the words that Jesus used at his last meal with the disciples, what we now call the Last Supper. The Latin words are 'Madatum novum da vobis' – a new commandment I give you'. Do you know what that commandment is? You can read the whole account in St John's Gospel, chapter 13.

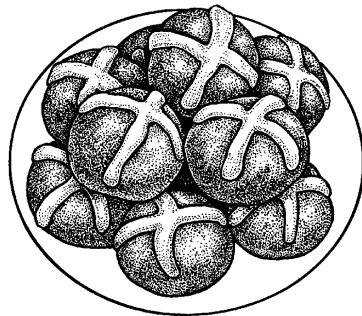
Then comes Good Friday - a lot of people can't see why a day that commemorates the trial and crucifixion of Jesus could be called 'good'. It was a black day but Christians know that without what happened that Friday there would be no Easter. Without the death of our Lord there would have been no empty tomb on Easter Day, no glorious Resurrection.

## HOT CROSS BUNS

One of the pleasures of Easter is eating hot cross buns. Like most things they cost more now than they did in this old rhyme...

Hot Cross Buns,  
Hot Cross Buns,  
One a penny, two a penny,  
Hot Cross Buns.  
If you have no daughters,  
Give them to your sons,  
One a penny, two a penny,  
Hot Cross Buns.

If you have some time to spare, see how many words you can make from the letters in the words HOT CROSS BUNS. Words of at least 3 letters, no plurals, proper names or foreign words.



**What do you get when you pour boiling water down a rabbit hole?**

A hot cross bunny.

**Why couldn't the rabbit fly home for Easter?**

He didn't have the hare fare.

## SWEET MOMENT AS CHOCOLATE PRODUCTION FOR EASTER EGG COMES TO UK

CHOCOLATE PRODUCTION for The Real Easter Egg has been moved from Europe to the UK - due to increased demand.

More than a million eggs have been sold in the past five years and in a recent public poll the product was voted the UK's favourite Fairtrade Easter Egg. Such a large volume of chocolate is now needed that production has moved from Europe to Barry Callebaut in Banbury.

Launched in 2010 following a trial involving churches in the Diocese of Oxford, The Real Easter Egg became the UK's first and only Fairtrade egg to include a copy of the Easter story. It is still the UK's only charity egg. By Easter 2016 The Meaningful Chocolate Company (MCC), makers of the egg, expects to have given away more than £200,000 to charitable causes.

The Rt Revd Colin Fletcher, acting Bishop of Oxford, said: 'The Real Easter Egg began its public life in 2009 encouraged by individuals, churches and schools in Oxford Diocese. So it is fitting that sales are sufficient to warrant Fairtrade chocolate being moved to Banbury. I pray for all those involved, the workforce, the creative team behind the idea and those who will read the Easter story for the first time in 2016 and discover the Good News of hope and new life.'

Increased sales of the chocolate have also meant a bigger Fairtrade Premium is paid to farmers who grow the sugar and Cacao. Cash from the premium is used to invest in their communities, where everything from school books to solar panels have been purchased. David Marshall, CEO of MCC, said: 'The move to Banbury means the Real Easter Egg is now a fully UK manufactured product. We have also taken the opportunity to improve our blend of chocolate so it is better than ever. Our customers include ethical retailer Traidcraft and hundreds of independent retailers. We sell direct to thousands of customers, churches and schools and our eggs are also stocked at Tesco, Morrisons and Waitrose. Most significantly, lives have been transformed through the work of the global Fairtrade movement and the Fairtrade Premium – reversing the legacy of the slave trade.'

Chief Adam Tampuri, representing one of the cooperatives supplying the chocolate used by MCC, thanked Marshall for the company's support. 'The money paid to us through the Fairtrade Premium has meant such a difference to our community,' he said.

See pictures on the back cover.



## Taunton Against Poverty



We have been busy and we would like to say thank you to those of you who have been so generous to the poor in Taunton, this past year. Over the Christmas period we displayed a tree at the charity Christmas tree festival at Taunton United Reformed Church and we gave out vouchers to help people buy basics for Christmas. We are planning more fund raising events and after requests we will be raising holiday funds again this year.

In 2015 the Evangelical Alliance released a report 'Good News for the Poor?' It's worth a read. Part of it states that 73% of Christians gave to a charity to tackle poverty overseas. 70% donated to foodbanks, 56% give directly to someone they know, 45% still give even though they are poor themselves, 44% say their church is working on a project to address poverty in their own community. But, a quarter admit their church does not do effective work to tackle poverty locally. The report also states that many people who lift themselves out of poverty do so as soon as they find Christ.'

Another Christian Charity, the Children's Society are often in the forefront of research to help combat poverty on behalf of children and young people. One of their latest concerns has been the cost of travel to get children or young people to school or college.

Government funding on fuel poverty in 2014-15 totalled £3.2 bn in the UK. But, despite this, a quarter of UK families still have to choose between heating and eating. In 2015 Somerset Intelligence released key messages for Somerset. They state that since 2010 there has been a slight shift towards greater deprivation in Somerset relative to the rest of England, particularly in relation to the quality of housing. That includes at least 38,000 who live in a neighbourhood identified as one of the most 20% deprived in England. These areas are in the main urban environments especially the Lambrook/Halcon area, the most deprived area of Taunton. The least deprived area is the Sampson Wood area of Yeovil which falls within the 1% least deprived in England. It is also interesting to note that many food bank users were not made aware of the various crisis payments available in different circumstances and even fewer were receiving them. In addition to this 19-28% of users of food banks, for whom additional data was collected, had recently had household benefits stopped or reduced because of a sanction. In addition to this 28-34% were waiting for a benefit claim which had not been decided resulting in having no food to eat for either an individual or their family.

There is still so much to be done, even though so many are doing it here in various ways at St. James and in Taunton. One of the most powerful things we can do is to continue to pray.

'Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit and to turn their

# GRANDPA'S TALES

## Who looks after us?

When Grandpa was about 6, in India, he had his own pony. He had special riding trousers called “jodhpurs” (because they were first worn in Jodhpur, India), and a riding crop.

Each evening, after tea, the ‘sceiss’ would bring the pony round to the front of the house and I would be lifted into the saddle. Off we would go along pathways and tracks. Sometimes we would canter and the sceiss had to run to keep up! I had a marvellous time and thought of the day when I would be old enough to have a big polo pony, like the ones the grown-ups rode. There is a photograph of Grandpa on his horse.



One day, while I was having a ride, my mother was walking along with us, as she often did, when suddenly a cobra reared up in the grass in front of the horse! Horses don't much like things that suddenly rear up in front of them! The horse bolted and galloped off as fast as it could - with Grandpa clinging on for dear life!!

I can remember gripping the saddle with my knees and holding the reins tight. That kept me in the saddle, but it did not stop the horse. Once a horse is frightened ('spoofed'), it will gallop until it is tired!



I was too young to have learnt about “reining in” a horse, so I did not pull hard enough on the reins, or else I was just too small to be able to do it.

After galloping for what seemed like half an hour, but was probably only a few minutes, we came to a man standing in front of us with his arms outstretched. At this, the horse threw up his back legs and put his head down and Grandpa had a flying lesson!! Right over the horse’s head I flew, into the undergrowth!! The man was able to grab the reins of the horse, and eventually, after a bit of rearing up, it calmed down. Mum and the sceiss came running along to find me sitting in the bushes!!

We walked home, and everyone said how brave I had been to hold on so tightly. I don’t know about that, but I had to tell the story of what happened over and over again to the other grown-ups!

After a short while, to recover from my bruises, I was riding again - a different horse this time, it was supposed to be a more placid one!

You know, we read in the Bible, that God has given His angels charge over us (Psalm 91: 11), in other words, His angels protect us when we are in danger, and we are doing His will. I believe that the angels also especially protect children, because Jesus loved children, and if we have asked God for His protection, He will protect us.

I believe that there was an angel protecting me when that horse bolted.

An angel protected me at other times in my life too. I remember once when I . . . but that’s another story!

**Jack Edmonds**



## ***The PCC has been discussing...***

Here's a summary of the main things the Parochial Church Council looked at in its December, January and February meetings.

### **Changes to the pattern of services**

The PCC agreed a number of changes to service patterns, which will begin in April.

**Morning Services:** All Age Worship will move to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, primarily to allow more time for setting up. Morning Worship and Messy Church will move to the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday. Other Sundays remain the same. The communion service on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday will move slightly to 08:30; in due course we could consider providing breakfast between the two 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday services.

**Evening Services:** These will have a consistent style and become a real alternative for those who are unable to attend in the morning. The current 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Praise Service is gradually growing, so will continue and be used as the basis for development. All services will start at 7pm. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday will be a "Praise Communion" and the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday will concentrate on teaching, taking over from the present afternoon "Tea and Teaching". The 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday will continue as an opportunity for other types of worship – Taizé, visual, meditative, etc.

**Mid-Week Services:** the present monthly Wednesday communion service will become weekly. The growing Praise and Play service, earlier on Wednesdays, will continue and there will be a shared refreshment time between the two services.

### **Vision / Five Year Plan**

Make a note in your diary for the Annual Meeting on Monday 11 April. Tim Jones and Geoff Treasure will present the results from the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis conducted by the home groups. This is part of our process for discerning what God wants us to be looking at over the next few years, and the PCC will value your feedback.

### **Coordinators**

The role of Teaching Coordinator will be widened into becoming a Discipleship Coordinator, for which a job description has been prepared. It is hoped that a new person will be found to replace Geoff Treasure when he steps down in April.

The process continues for appointing a new C&YP Coordinator in July. Thought is also being given to creating a new role of Premises Coordinator, to relieve the churchwardens of the continual pressure of overseeing repairs.

Please see the separate report from the Coordinators' meeting.

### **Mission Grants**

This is the time of year the PCC decides on support to be given to our mission partners. We will continue to support Barnabas Fund, Samaritans Purse, WEC International and Tear Fund. Locally, the existing level of support for Taunton Team Chaplaincy, Taunton Youth for Christ and Open Door will be maintained. We will commence financial support for Street Pastors (to help with this year's training course), and Besom (who need to rent premises for their expanding work).

### **Other items**

**Taunton Area Debt Advice** (formerly St James Debt Advice) is now set up as a separate charity. We continue as the main funder. Many thanks to Graham Reid and Liz Rawle for all their hard work.

**Home for Good:** The PCC agreed a proposal for St James to be a "Home for Good" church, supporting families that foster or adopt. Sheila Marlow is the point of contact.

**House Party:** preliminary planning for a church weekend away in 2017 is underway.

**October count:** do you remember filling in those attendance forms in October? They show that 194 members (not visitors) attended at least once, a net increase of 10 over 2014.

**Budget for 2016:** The total projected income is £128,100 and the expenditure £129,267. The inclusion of a provisional extra £5,000 for repairs arising from the Quinquennial Inspection produces a projected deficit of £1,167, but this is under 1% of our expenditure, so we just need to be careful in making decisions.

**Stewardship:** Richard Taylor presented the annual review of Stewardship giving. We lost some major givers last year, but new recruits to the Gift Aid scheme appear to have filled the holes. If you are not enrolled on this scheme, please see Richard about joining it, and planning your support for your church.

*The latest full PCC minutes are displayed near the coffee area. MW*

# ***Coordinators' Report***

The PCC received a report from the Coordinators' Meeting, which took place in February. Here are some of the topics covered.

## **General Discussion**

- Tim Jones reported on a 'Continuing Ministerial Education' day at St Paul's, Weston-Super-Mare. This church has grown recently to a congregation of over 300. Tim proposes to hold a PCC Away Day there, possibly in the summer, to see what we can learn.

## **Worship**

- Richard Lucas reported that the worship team is working well and that the singers and musicians have been very positive about being on a rota to help set up before the service.
- The Praise Service continues to grow and those leading it are taking on more responsibility.

## **Children & Young People**

- Kate Taylor reported that Praise and Play is thriving and that some mums from the Toddler Group have joined after going to the Christmas party. There is a possibility that an Alpha Course for young mums might be run in the future.

## **Teaching**

- Geoff Treasure and Tim Jones are beginning to plan another Growing Leaders course.

## **Outreach**

- Jenny Wakefield and Roger Fenton had attended a course about equipping members of the church, and will be sharing their thoughts and ideas with the home group leaders.
- Proposed opportunities for outreach include: an after dinner speaker, a Church Family Fun Day in June; the French Weir Fun Day in August; a Barn Dance and a Light Party in October.

## **Pastoral**

- Annie Reid reported that the email prayer chain continues to be used very regularly.
- There is a new team of eight 'welcomers' to help and support the sidespeople. These people have a gift for remembering faces, and will be able to focus on helping newcomers to integrate.

## **Administration**

- Dates required for bookings need to be given well in advance, as the buildings are very busy.

# THE FRUIT TRAIN

A disembodied voice reached out over the tannoy..."The next train to arrive at Platform 1 will call at Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Gentleness, Faithfulness and Self Control. Please change at Self Control for your onward journey."

I write this from Carriage D (no smoking or mobile phones). My presence here is a bit of a mystery. The ticket arrived, unbidden and free of charge, through last week's post. The eventual destination is a different country and a house full of many rooms. The accompanying brochure described it as 'heavenly'. Now, much as I'm a fan of National Trust properties I'm usually cautious about free lunches. I haven't discovered a catch yet. No snake oil salesmen so far!

The back of my ticket says 'This is a publically owned railway'. Being a child of rail privatisation of the 80's, I asked the conductor about this exception, and he replied, "When the engineer designed this, he wanted everyone to be shareholders in the enterprise- not with their money, but with their hearts. And it was to be free."

"Where does the engineer fit in?" I asked. "Well, the engineer's the mastermind, you see. He breathed life into it, it's his creation. He got men and women involved by giving given them brains to be able to build all this. In management speak, you'd call it a partnership."

The map on the compartment wall showed the mainline and branch lines from each of the stations. The conductor explained: "You're free to get off at any station and enjoy yourself. The district around each station has its own atmosphere and seems to exhibit the essence of our founder, the engineer. The branch lines always loop back to the mainline. But a warning- be careful about travelling down sidings. They seem attractive at first, but soon lose their shimmer and you'll hit the buffers before long. I arrange a rescue party for those who get lost. In fact we have a celebration when they get back to the train, but

the engineer gets really upset if we're separated."

We crossed rivers over cantilever bridges. The waters below tossed and foamed in angry turmoil. I felt grateful that we were being kept away from the danger below.

Opposite was a young, dark haired woman with glasses, reading a book. She seemed pensive, but I attempted conversation, and asked her what she was reading. "Oh, the conductor recommended it," she said quickly. I could see she had been crying. After composing herself she continued, "He keeps copies on board. It's not your average Lonely Planet guide, but perhaps it is, now I think about it."

"Is it any good?"

"Well, it's the conductor's biography... difficult, but looks promising in places. Just now he came along hot and tired and asked if he could sit where you are now. Anyway, we got talking. By and by I told him how I'd been really unhappy at home and had to come away for some space. He showed me bits of the book where he had helped and even healed people. What do you reckon on that! He also said he would pray for me."

"Just who is this conductor?" I said.

"In the book he says this." She pointed out a passage: 'I am leaving you with a gift, peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give, so don't be troubled or afraid.' Looking at me with a half-smile, she sighed "I can't get peace from my own world, so I might just try his. He seems trustworthy, somehow. I've nothing to lose, maybe everything to gain."

I remembered the curious arrival of a free ticket on my doormat, and wondered if I had been prayed for too.

The compartment speaker crackled into life. "We will shortly be arriving at Love, Love the next stop." I had a feeling the journey towards that stately home would be a great adventure...

Andy Hall

# NEWSLETTER CONTACTS LIST

Contacts for Pastoral Matters

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Magazine Editor - Andrew Slade 01823 259440 e-mail: 3waypersonalprint@gmail.com

Churchwardens - Stan Wojcik 01823 443287 / Ruth Stevens 01823 972838

## HOME GROUPS

Tuesday

10:30 am 34 Dunkleys Way (Contact Jean Jarrett 288144)

Wednesday

2:30 pm 15 Barrington Close Fortnightly (Contact Ken Jamieson 289367)

7:30 pm 13 Gyffarde Street

(Contact Mark Stevens 972838; hosts Bethan and Tim Baigent 271655)

7:30 pm 28 Comeytrowe Lane

(Contact Steve Bradford 337690; hosts Wakefields 277318)

7:30 pm Killams Group (Contact Les Andrews 254344)

7:45 pm 42 Ashley Road (Contact Richard Sainsbury 284688)

8:00 pm Hesperia The Avenue (Contact Richard Carpenter 277916)

8:00 pm North Taunton (Contact Mark Johnson 07796525094) - Fortnightly

Thursday

2:30 pm 25 Whitmore Road (Contact Kathryn Clarke 283691)

2:30 pm 27 Priorswood Road (Contact Kay Seed 251077; host Sue Collard 271858)

7:30 pm 69 Richmond Road Womens' Group (Contact Margaret Jones 333194)

7:30 pm 21 Ryesland Way (Contact Geoff Treasure 490458)

8:00 pm 12 The Avenue (Contact Sue Doyle 271223; host Annie Reid 07812 130619)

## OTHER GROUPS

- Mondays      Parent and Toddlers Group 10am-11.30am in the Church Hall  
Contact Kate Taylor (619739)
- Tuesdays      Bell ringing (alternate weeks) Contact Marian Gentile (275278)
- Wednesdays      Art Group in the Church Hall Contact Church Office (272931)
- Praise and Play in the Church 10am - 11am - for pre-school children  
                    and their parents/ carers every Wednesday.  
                    Contact Kate Taylor (619739)
- Thursdays      Thursday Fellowship (first Thursday of the month)  
                    in the Church Hall Contact Vicky Dykes (282507)

## Crossword Answers

ACROSS: 1, Wine. 3, The alert. 8, Ooze. 9, Passover. 11, Garden Tomb. 14, Cannot. 15, Elisha. 17, Gethsemane.  
20, Own house. 21, Lisa. 22, Flogging. 23, Stye.

DOWN: 1, Wrong act. 2, Nazarene. 4, Health. 5, Assemblies. 6, Envy. 7, Turn. 10, Before long. 12, Iscariot.  
13, Take care. 16, The Son. 18, Loaf. 19, Unto.



Pic 1: Rt Revd Colin Fletcher, acting Bishop of Oxford (left) with Kieran Shaw of Barry Callebaut, producers of Oxfordshire Fairtrade chocolate and the 2016 Real Easter Egg.



Pic 2 & 3: Rt Revd Colin Fletcher, acting Bishop of Oxford at Barry Callebaut, producers of Oxfordshire Fairtrade chocolate, with the 2016 Real Easter Egg.

## DECEMBER NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

The Next Newsletter is due out on 5th June. All entries for this Newsletter must be submitted by 30th April. All entries are at the discretion of the Editorial team and the space available.