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**St Catherine's Tilehurst
Parish Magazine
Summer 2023**



From the editor



Welcome to this Summer edition of our Parish Magazine. I hope that within its pages you will find articles of interest.

Publication is a little later than I had planned, this is because there are two 'stop press' topics that I wanted to cover. The first of these is the departure of our popular Café manager Karen who left with our grateful thanks and best wishes, see page 25. The second is the search for our new vicar and the latest news is on page 5. SPOILER ALERT – both these positions remain unfilled!

I still hope to publish the next (Autumn) edition by the end of September, but this means that I shall soon need to begin planning it and gathering copy. But then I thought: HANG ON! The magazine used to come out every month (apart from August and January) and there wasn't much breathing space between each of the ten issues.

With only four issues now life should be easier for this editor! Previous editors Stuart (2002 to 2012), and before him Jack and Phil didn't have the breathing space that I now have and indeed the character and content of the magazine has evolved; for instance, we used to list details of the next month's services.

What changed everything? Yes, Covid which for many areas of life that I was involved with have caused for me 'The great re-set.' Start again with, as it were, 'blank sheet of paper'? Except memories of what used to be aren't erased.

It's as if all the pieces have been thrown up in the air and some have come down changed, others never returned. At this point it's tempting to look back thinking 'Fings aint wot they used to be.' But I know that one should see 'problems' as 'opportunities.'

Yes, during the Covid break when there was the opportunity to re-evaluate this magazine and as a result, we've reduced the number of issues but have gone 'full colour' and more pages which does justice to the many photos I'm sent. The content will not be out of date so quickly.

Had it not been for the Covid break we would not have had to think about 'streaming' and recording our services, something still appreciated by many, another 'opportunity.' Many activities have been able to resume, almost as if nothing happened. But equally there are gaps that have never been filled.

Covid may simply have hastened the inevitable and enabled us to have a clean break from the past rather than a long lingering decline, as may be the case for our Holiday club. But for now, it is a matter of great regret to many of us that our annual holiday club did not continue and we've lost contact with the hundreds of children we welcomed each year. Right now, it's hard to see where any resulting 'opportunity' will come from. Read the Bible study on page 4 for an answer!

Tony Bartlett

Let us make mankind in our image



I've recently had the privilege of working alongside the charity 'RE Inspired' delivering RE lessons into local primary schools. We were trying to answer the question "What is God like?"

My small group was assigned the creation story from Genesis 1 & 2 to examine.

Many Christians will instantly become nervous when asked to look at these passages. They become defensive about questions regarding the time period (six days!) and order (light before sun?). And what about evolution?

Sadly you can become so wrapped up in the mechanics, it becomes easy to miss just how much these passages tell us about God, about ourselves, and also about relationships between us and God as well as relationships between ourselves.

To me, the most powerful verse is Genesis 1:26a "Let us make mankind in our image".

To many children hearing this for the first time, it can be a revelation that God is like us in many, many ways. Once you explain that we're not talking about physical appearance (God isn't an old man with a white beard) we can talk about our characteristics and our personality. Humans can be kind, loving and fun with a sense of humour - and we're like that because God is like that! We enjoy creating things, because God enjoys creating things. Making friends is important to children, and it's the same for God!

This clearly has implications on how we treat those around us. Modern media (both social and traditional) seems to enjoy complaining, finding fault and pulling people down. It seems that there are no accidents or lapses of judgement, instead someone must be found at fault and punished.

God doesn't like faults and will point out our flaws, but his goal is to love us, build us up, encourage us and ultimately improve us. If we're made in his image, and if we want to follow Jesus' example, we should do the same. We should love, build up and encourage those around us. If God loves and provides for his people, we should do the same.

We can do this in both our church community and in the wider world around us. Everyone is made in God's image. If we love and seek to honour God, then we should love and help those made in his image.

Stuart

Dates for your Diary



Saturday 30th September – Quiz night

Saturday 18th November – Autumn Fair

Sunday 19th November - 'Shoebox' service

YOUR PRAYERS CAN CHANGE THE SITUATION

'Remember the solemn promise you made.'

Exodus 32:13 CEV



If you're not sure your prayers can change the situation you're in right now, read the story of Moses interceding with God not to destroy the Israelites because of the golden calf and committing idolatry:

'Moses tried to get...God to change his mind...Remember the solemn promise you made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You promised that someday they would have as many descendants as there are stars in the sky and that you would give them land. So even though the LORD had threatened to destroy the people, he changed his mind and let them live' (vv. 11, 13-14 CEV).

Moses was on his face one minute, and in God's face the next. For the lives of his people, he was on his knees, pointing his finger, raising his hands, crying tears, tearing his cloak, and wrestling like Jacob at the brook.

Notice how he prayed. He reminded God of His covenant promises. He stood on the Word! And if there is one thing that will get God's attention and cause Him to respond to your needs, it's standing on His Word. God's word in the matter is always God's will in the matter.

'We are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for' (1 John 5:14-15 NLT).

You are similar to electric wire through which God's power and presence can flow into any situation, and in prayer you flip the switch. So instead of complaining about the situation, begin to pray about it.

This thought is taken from 'The Word for Today', Daily Bible reading notes produced quarterly by UCB (United Christian Broadcasters Ltd) PO Box 255, Stoke on Trent, ST4 8YY. If you would like to receive these free (although UCB do welcome donations) notes or those aimed at Secondary School age, call UCB on 01782 911 000

St Catherine's in Vacancy

The Ongoing Journey to Appoint a New Vicar

Our journey to find a new vicar, following Gill Rowell's departure at the end of November 2022, has continued since the spring edition of RG31. The parish profile, which potential candidates use to understand what we are looking for as we seek to serve God, our community and our church, has been produced – after some significant effort!

Key inputs to that profile were firstly the findings of the listening exercise, which many of you were involved in, which sought to identify who we are and our future direction, and secondly the analysis of that listening at a parish meeting on 26th March, facilitated by Rhodri Bowen, the Diocesan Parish Development Advisor. The PCC and members of the diocese formally reviewed and approved the profile at a meeting (known as a Section 12 meeting!) on 6th May

The post was advertised at the end of May in the Church Times, Pathways and the Oxford Diocese website, with a closing date of 25th June. The diocese, our patron and St Catherine's 2 PCC representatives, Lynn Stevens and Caroline Heron, jointly agreed to take forward one candidate to interview on Thursday 13th July.

The day went smoothly, thanks to the efforts of many, whether organising the event, participating in the interview activities, arranging chairs, catering or suspending their usual activities to provide space.

The activities included a bible study with 9 church members led by the candidate, a parish tour, an interview, and an all-age talk in which we were presented with an interesting take on the parable of the healing of the paralytic lowered through the roof.

The talk was delivered to about 20 church members and an attentive, small lively group of Birch Copse pupils – some commented that perhaps we as St Catherine's church members could learn from the Birch Copse pupils' active participation! An informal lunch provided the candidate and ourselves the opportunity to relax and informally get to know each other.

We all are keen to know the outcome of the interview, but as we write, we wait for the diocese to finalise the discussions and agree the way forward with the candidate. Patience is required – something that most of us find difficult! – as we continue to seek the appointment of God's chosen person.

Ongoing Church Activities

We have benefitted from the wealth of teaching provided by visiting clergy – including Bishop Olivia, Polly Falconer, Alan Gates, Stephen Pullen, Mike Smith, Judith Sumner, Tracy Watkins, as well as Chris Stratta from the Leprosy Mission.

Susie Templeton joined us for a number of services between jobs and we wish her all the best as she moves from the Reading area to her new post in Cornwall.

Ann Cogle, Richard Bainbridge and Anna Hansell are virtually new visitors to us and

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we look forward to welcoming them in the coming weeks. There have been some unavoidable changes as other demands have prevented us from inviting Judith Sumner and the St George's team for the time being.

As in previous years, our services have moved outside in July and August – though our windy, wet July has been disappointing and has meant many of the services have been indoors and we have had to imagine hard that we are outside!

The Leaders and Preachers Action Group have all the arrangements in hand through to end of August, and will shortly be turning their attention to September and October.

At the APCM on 23rd April, Heather Addison, Jean Almond and Ella Canning were welcomed as PCC members, and Richard Yates and Stuart Poore agreed to serve for a further term. 'Richard Canning, as one of our deanery synod representatives, has also joined the PCC. Many thanks to Katrina Yates for her contribution over the last years as she comes to the end of her term.'

Do pray for the PCC as they work to move St Catherine's forward in God's direction.

The Coronation celebrations were a great opportunity and excuse to get together and have fun! Fortunately our main celebrations on the Sunday of the coronation weekend, in which a morning parade service was held, followed by fun and activities later in the afternoon, enjoyed a lot sunnier weather than on Coronation Day itself!

There is a special event fast approaching – 2 members of our congregation, Andrea and Matty, are getting married at the beginning of October. We all wish them an enjoyable and memorable day, and many happy days of married life to come.

On a sadder note, a much loved church member, Beryl Nunn, died in June. We had an opportunity to celebrate all she meant to us at her funeral on 27th June, and to thank God for her life.

Our prayer continues to be that we grow together in our faith and knowledge of God and love for one another. Many thanks for all that you do to support and grow our life at St Catherine's.

Lynn Stevens and Caroline Heron

Musings on the Christian walk

Make sure it is God's trumpet you are blowing - if it is only yours it won't wake the dead, it will simply disturb the neighbours. - W Ian Thomas

There was a man, though some did count him mad, The more he cast away, the more he had. - John Bunyan

God does not keep office hours. - A W Tozer

When considering your future: give God what's right - not what's left. - Anon

When praying, don't give God instructions - just report for duty. - Anon

As summer continues... This church is prayer-conditioned. - Anon

Comfort for new curates - When God ordains, He sustains. - Anon

WARNING: Exposure to the Son may prevent burning.

It is easier for the generous to forgive, than for the offender to ask forgiveness. - James Thomson

Beryl Florence Nunn

26th June 1931 - 4th June 2023



Beryl was born and brought up in Boarded Lane in the centre of Reading.

Her father died when she was five leaving her mother to fend for the large family.

Beryl went to St. Marys School in Hosier Street and attended Hosier Street Chapel and Greyfriars Church.

Along came the war and Beryl was very lucky to escape the Reading bombing on 10th February 1943 as she was walking along Minster Street with her class to King's Meadow swimming pool. Sadly, two of her class mates were killed and she liked to attend the yearly memorial service, when she could, held outside Blandy & Blandy.

Swimming was Beryl's passion, and she was a member of Reading Swimming Club, even participating in some international meets. She also enjoyed wrestling, shouting at the TV from the settee, at Jackie Pallo and Giant Haystacks.

Beryl was also a great football fan and always listened to Radio Berkshire's coverage of Reading FC's games on Saturday afternoons.

She often recounted how she and her 'step-dad' walked from Theale to Elm Park Football ground for the Boxing Day

match, only stopping to eat a picnic lunch of lemonade and sandwiches in Prospect Park!

Beryl had a very good memory and always had lots of tales to tell about her child and teenage years during the summer holidays. She would always be out and about with a group of friends including her brother Gordon. There were stories of scrumping apples, and jumping into the horse fountain in St. Mary's Butts to cool down.

On one occasion they managed to get on the train to London and spent the day running up and down the escalators, sometimes being chased by the inspectors!

Another time her mother forbade them to go in the local river but of course the temptation was too great and unfortunately when they were jumping off Duke Street bridge a reporter took a photo which appeared in The Chronicle. Her mother saw this and said, "Don't you think I can't recognise my own children?" and they were in real trouble!! An early night followed.

In her later teens Beryl went to live with a childless couple Evelyn & Frank Davies in Theale, devout worshippers at Greyfriars Church who "spoilt her rotten", as Beryl often said. Frank was a tailor and so Beryl was always well turned out in handmade skirts and winter coats.

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Beryl was a long time member of St. Johns Ambulance based in Theale and enjoyed a good social life including Motorcycle scrambles which she was very enthusiastic about.

She was proud to receive the high award of 'Sister of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem'.

Beryl was encouraged to join Church Army and trained at Sol Joel college where she made lifelong friends, many of whom went on to be ordained, including Marion & Arthur and Ann & Malcolm.

Chris Jones knew Beryl from when she was Rama a leader in Theale Cubs which her two boys joined. Sonia & Sue met Beryl when we worshipped at St. Birinus and came to St. Catherine's when it closed.

In 1983, following the death of Evelyn & Frank, Beryl moved to her flat in Royal Avenue. Phyllis was Beryl's good friend and neighbour and in later years the two of them spent many hours together shopping and days out on the bus.

Beryl really missed Phyllis when she passed away 2 years ago.

During lockdown we held a surprise 90th birthday tea in her garden where a few of us were able to get together and enjoy tea, cakes and laughter!

Beryl was always keen to be involved in Church activities whether it be running a

fete stall, polishing café cutlery or cleaning toys for Cornwell o – 5's.

She did a great job of making up order slips for the café and was particularly pleased to be able to host a house group in her flat..

RIP Beryl – she is now “IN GLORY LAND” to use her own words.

Sue Burston



A surprise 90th Birthday celebration



Toy tidy & Clean Cornwell o-5s

Cover picture

I'm sure that readers of this magazine will be familiar with the cover picture. Here's another view of the tower taken by Stuart.



You may know it as 'Wilder's Folly' or 'The Pigeon Tower' but I think that many people outside our area, perhaps as they catch a glance from the M4 or A4, wonder what it is.

You can find some stunning and atmospheric photos, particularly those taken at sunrise or sunset, of it online as

well as drone footage showing the roof with vegetation growing on it.

It is believed that the tower was built in 1769 and would originally have had an external wooden staircase leading to the rooms on the upper story. It was constructed on the instructions of the Rev Henry Wilder so that from it he could see Sulham house, his residence as well as Sulhampstead House where his future wife, Joan lived.

In the late nineteenth century the windows were bricked up and it was converted to a Dovecote.

The romantic gesture of building the 'Folly' meant that the name of Rev Wilder was preserved for generations to come.

The last of the Wilder owners, Mrs. Iris Moon, died in 2009 and her descendants are the Scutt family.

Musings on modern life

Gardens are not made by singing 'Oh how beautiful' and sitting in the shade. - Rudyard Kipling

Much trouble is caused by our yearnings getting ahead of our earnings. - Anon

Art is here because God meant it to be here. - Hans Rookmaaker

Tomorrow never comes, but the morning after certainly does. - Anon

Please don't walk on our church lawn. Grass grows by the inch but is worn down by the foot! - Anon

The most terrible of lies is not that which is uttered but that which is lived. - W G Clarke

We cannot control the evil tongues of others; but a good life enables us to disregard them. – Cato

Fire is the test of gold; adversity of strong men. - Seneca

If parents haven't learned something from experience, they can always learn it from their children. - Anon

Buying what you do not need is an easy road to needing what you cannot buy. - Anon

'There's a way of transferring funds that is even faster than electronic banking. It's called marriage.' - James Holt McGavran

Tom Hamblin Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory

It seems as though I've been in the wilderness for a long while now and I was definitely in need of the channel of communication with Father that I had enjoyed in our first encounters.

So in my usual manner I 'thought' of something random and knew that if God followed it up I would 'know' that He was answering. And He did.

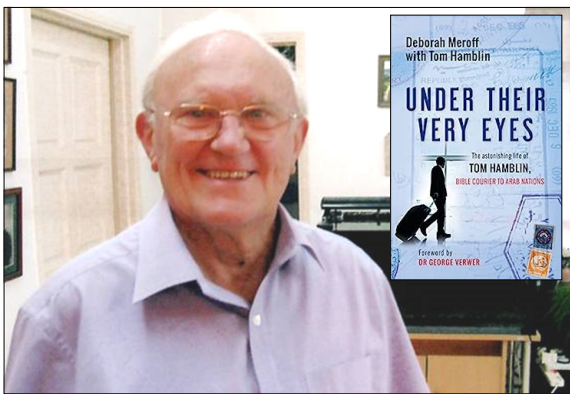
Who came to mind was Tom Hamblin. Tom and Edna worshipped at St Catherine's about eight or so years ago, so many of us will remember how charismatic he was. He often took the sermon and intercessions. I said to Father please show me a Tom Hamblin sign!

Weeks passed and I almost forgot about this request but one day while shopping I remember glancing at a couple and registering that they looked like Tom and Edna.

Then gave it no more thought until I saw in the Reading Chronicle that Tom had died on the 27th May. A bell rang and I was alerted to the fact that this may be what I was waiting for.

However, I gave this the benefit of the doubt but the next day I was at St Catherine's and there was a pile of books from the fayre destined for the charity shop.

I had a look through them and there, large as life was Tom's book called 'Under Their Very Eyes'.



Well, I couldn't believe my eyes and knew I had to take it home to read. "I'll just check when the funeral is" I thought and wasn't really surprised to read that it was this very same day, 21st June.

There was still more confirmation to come. I enjoy playing scrabble online and was looking up words starting with q. Qat was the first word.

I moved onto Tom's book and was engrossed reading, when suddenly the word QAT appeared along with it's meaning. It is a plant called Catha Edulis. Qat was also a deity, thought to be assimilated to our Christian God as was Catha a solar deity in mythology.

Next I came across a familiar word I use for Jesus, 'habibi' which is a term of endearment between good friends. I wondered what the message would be but had to wait until the last page to receive it.

Here it is, written by Tom..."God assigns. What an incredible privilege to know that our King is able to work out His plan and purpose through even the least of us, as long as we are willing to trust Him. And that's the underlying message of this book.

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I commit to you the words of the martyred Archbishop Oscar of Romero"...

"We accomplish in our lifetime only a fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete. No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our Faith. No programme accomplishes the church's mission. No set of goals or objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted with our prayers, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realising that. This enables us to do something and to do it very well. It may be incomplete but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results but that is the difference between the Master Builder and the worker.

We are the workers not the Master Builder; ministers not Messiahs; we are the prophets of a future not our own. Amen"

Mat 25:21 ESV His master said to him "Well done good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter in to the joy of your master."

Lorraine Roberts



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April

Hilary welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with prayer and notices of forthcoming events. Then she introduced John Painter to give an illustrated talk on Reading Abbey.

The Abbey was founded in 1121 by Henry I for Benedictine monks and when he died King Henry was buried in front of the high altar in the area now covered by St. James School and the prison car park.

It remained under royal patronage until its dissolution in 1539 and is renowned for its Romanesque carvings (seen in Reading Museum). Also the famous round 'Summer is icumen in' was written here in the 13th century and can be seen carved in stone in the Abbey wall.

Important royal events took place in the Abbey e.g. the marriage of John of Gaunt to Blanche of Lancaster in 1359, and Edward IV's secret marriage to Elizabeth Woodville in 1464. It was richly endowed by the royal family and others, and held churches and estates in many English counties.

The small town of Reading grew and prospered under its lordship. Sadly monastic life there ended in 1539 when the last abbot – Hugh Cook alias Faringdon – was found guilty of treason and executed.

Nowadays the St. James Way pilgrimage starting point is the Church of St. James, designed by Pugin who also designed the Houses of Parliament, then on to Southampton – a distance of 68.5 miles

from the Abbey. It is part of the Camino Ingles – the network of pilgrimage trails from as far north as Durham to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia where St. James is buried.

John finished his very interesting talk by answering questions and handing out leaflets produced by the Friends of Reading Abbey.

Sheila Bryant

May

We were pleased to welcome Katie Amos to our May meeting. Katie is a Local Studies Leader at Reading Library and an expert on local buildings of interest in the Reading area.

She gave a very interesting talk about Yeomanry House which is well known to many. It is situated at the corner of Castle Hill and Coley Avenue and was built in the early nineteenth century.

It was once known as Castle Hill House which is rather confusing as a house opposite had the exact same name. Over the years it has had many different owners and tenants.

Soon after it was built it was owned by John Sherwood and then by his widow, Harriet who was born in Burghfield. At that time the house had 17 acres of grounds but these were gradually reduced over the years. Later it was rented by Thomas Tredwell who was employed by the railway.

He was married with six daughters and he allowed the grounds to be used by local societies such as the Sunday School who held a social event there with games and a drink made of wine, often

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port, mixed with hot water, oranges or lemons, spices and sugar! John Cooper, who had connections to the Broad Street chapel now occupied by Waterstones, then owned the house. He had eleven children.

It was then owned by Walter Levett, Vicar of Bray and then by his nephew, Frederick Anson, a clergyman with connections to St Georges Chapel, Windsor. It was then owned by the Jesse family who were house builders locally.

In the late nineteenth century, it became a school. It must have been an imposing building with a grand entrance way with wyverns at the gate. It was then rented to the Berkshire Yeomanry in 1906. They added a drill hall and riding school.

When it was no longer required for military purpose, it was sold to Reading Borough Council for £39,000. It contained a museum, art gallery and registry office.

Some of the rooms, especially those used for weddings had beautiful ornate ceilings. Many local people remember visiting Yeomanry House for various purposes.

In 2017, it was put up for sale and bought to be used as a nursery. It is no longer used as a registry office but continues to be used as a local records office.

Thank you, Katie, for a most interesting evening!

Rosemary Cunningham

June

Hilary welcomed 24 members and friends to our annual Quiz Evening where we divided up into teams with the first challenge being to choose a suitable name.

Also we had printed papers with 'St Catherine's' on them and through the evening we endeavoured to think of as many books of the bible starting with those letters. Half way through the committee served a delicious Ploughman's supper which everyone enjoyed.

The winning team were the 'Hot Dogs' and the booby prize was awarded to 'The Speedy Spaniards'.

Moira expressed our thanks to Hilary for all the preparation and work she put into what was a really good evening and Rita presented her with a colourful chrysanthemum plant.

Sheila Bryant

July

20 members, husbands and friends enjoyed a delicious meal at the Toby Carvery for our annual dinner. Rita had arranged a separate room for us all which made the occasion more cosy and friendly. At the end Moira presented her with a token of appreciation and thanked Rita for organising the evening and making sure everyone had transport.

Sheila Bryant

The Mothers' Union Prayer

Loving Lord, We thank you for your love so freely given to us all. We pray for families around the world. Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life. Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world. In Jesus' name, Amen

Congratulations

to Nicola O’Sullivan who graduated from University Centre Sparsholt on 12th July at Winchester Cathedral with an MSc in Equine Behaviour, Performance, and Training, this despite the debilitating effects of FND (Functional Neurological Disorder).



Operation Christmas Child



We are arranging our ‘Shoebox’ service for 10.00am on Sunday 19th November.

There’ll be leaflets explaining all about the scheme and a supply of ‘flat pack’ Shoeboxes by the end of August, you will just need to buy/find suitable gifts to fill them.

Now is a good time to begin collecting the items to fill a Shoebox for ‘Operations Christmas Child’.

There’ll be more information on the Notice sheets or speak to Tony Bartlett or Joanne Freeman.



Cornwell 0-5's Toddler Group

Run by St Catherine's Parish Church in the Cornwell Centre



This toddler group has been running for over 30 years now, the last 5 years by St Catherine's and has a good reputation.

Tuesdays 10.00am - 12.00noon is for up to 20 family groups (parents/grandparents) and the children get healthy snacks of fruit (the pictures below were of Shrove Tuesday so also mini-pancakes as a treat).

Several of the older children are moving on so we'll have vacancies when we re-start on 12th September.

Thursdays 10.00 - 12.00noon is just for registered childminders; maximum 15.

All sessions have to be pre-booked each week via 'Eventbrite' and the cost; £3.50 is paid 'on the door' by cash or card.

We have a very good selection of toys etc. serve good quality refreshments and encourage all the children to join in 'singing time'. It is run by a small team of volunteers from the church. Details are on the church website; see back page.



Aidan, the man who brought Christianity to England

31st August is the feast of St Aidan, who brought Christianity to northern England. He is a strong contender for the title of the first English bishop. Not that honours meant a great deal to this austere but captivating character.

In 635 he came to Northumbria at the invitation of the local ruler, Oswald. Oswald had spent several years of his childhood on Iona, and when he succeeded to the throne of his northern kingdom he was shrewd enough to realise that the Christian faith would be an ideal unifying force to pacify rival tribes of warlords.

Oswald's invitation was not immediately successful. The first missionary from Iona returned in despair, claiming that the barbarity of the Northumbrians made them unconvertible. But as Aidan listened, he felt the unmistakable call of God to try again.

"Perhaps you were too harsh on them," he found himself suggesting to the travel-stained missionary. Shortly afterwards, Aidan found himself at the head of a party of brothers heading for Northumbria. He was never to see his beloved Iona again.

The monks made the long journey to Northumbria on foot, singing psalms as they went. Their need to ward off the powers of evil with prayer was genuine, for these were dangerous times to travel through remote country unarmed. They arrived safely at Oswald's castle in Bamburgh, where he offered them lavish hospitality and assumed that they would 'found' their community there.

However, the brothers realised that to live under the king's protection would make it difficult to avoid the world's temptations and establish a rapport with the local people. They saw the tidal island of Lindisfarne on the horizon and chose it as their base. The rest, as the saying goes, is history.

Aidan was much loved as a teacher and evangelist; though stern in his own self-discipline, he was prepared to travel to the most inaccessible villages, where he cared for the local people with compassion and gentleness. In time, his influence grew, and noble people joined the stream of visitors to Lindisfarne.

After Oswald's death in 642, his brother Oswin succeeded him as king. Oswin was concerned about Aidan's habit of walking everywhere. The saint was ageing rapidly, his body weakened by years of harsh fasting and exposure to the elements. Oswin wondered what would happen to him one day on the road, and also he felt that such a lowly means of travel was not appropriate for a bishop. So, he gave Aidan one of his finest horses, complete with a beautifully worked saddle and bridle.

Aidan did not feel able to risk offending the king by spurning his generosity, but he rode out of the palace with a heavy heart. He knew that people would relate to him differently now that he had the trappings of affluence, and that it would be dangerous to stop and rest with such valuable belongings beside him.

The king had intended to give him

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Pick N Mix

Pick N Mix is St Catherine's Friday night youth group for 11 to 18 year olds. We meet fortnightly during term time.

It is a safe place to have fun, relax and socialise.

Over this past year we have enjoyed various activities including - crafts, quizzes, chip shop walks, films, pizza, gaming and our summer barbecue.

Each evening is always full of laughter and chatter and always involves food!

At the end of each session we have a five minute 'Words of Wisdom' which is based on the Bible. This often produces interesting discussions and questions.

Four of our members are going off to University next term. We are sad they are leaving us, but thrilled at their achievements. We had a goodbye BBQ at the end of term to celebrate.

Thank you to all the young people who attend Pick N Mix for your enthusiasm, honesty and diversity. We pray God's blessings on all your futures. You are amazing people. Thanks also, to Dee and Stuart for being faithful, fun leaders.

Please pray for the future of St Catherine's youth group, as we discern how or if we continue in the Autumn.

Lynn Stevens



(Continued from page 17)

comfort, but his gesture had had the opposite effect. Aidan had learnt that possessions, and the need to protect them, make it more difficult to follow God with an undivided heart. The story goes that he gave the horse, complete with saddle, to the first beggar he met outside the palace gates.

A more pragmatic Christian might have reasoned that keeping on the right side of Oswin would lead to opportunities that were too valuable to risk. Indeed, the king was angry when he heard what Aidan had done. "That horse was fit for a king, not for some vagabond," he protested. "I could have found you an old nag if you wanted to give it away."

Aidan's reply was simply, "What do you think, O King? Is the son of a mare worth more in your eyes than that the Son of God?"

There was an awkward silence; then the King removed his sword, knelt at Aidan's feet and asked his forgiveness. When he returned to the banqueting table, it was with a beaming smile. Sadly, he too was to perish in battle shortly afterwards; these were violent times.

Yet Oswin, whose culture demanded that he should appear all-powerful in the eyes of his followers, had been publicly humbled by the integrity of a simple monk who had challenged his values.

Source 'The Parish Pump' resources

St Catherine's Celebrates



Here at St Catherine's we had two days of celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III.

On the Saturday, 6th May, we live streamed the Coronation service in church and everyone enjoyed watching and raising a glass to the crowning of the King.



Then on the Sunday morning we had a special Coronation church service with the Scouts parading into church and joining us to thank God for our new King.



Sunday afternoon saw us having fun and games in the church grounds. There was a fantastic atmosphere and sunny weather! The event was well attended by families and all age ranges.

With lots of things to do including, children's craft and activities, quizzes, a treasure hunt and having a selfie with the King and Queen!

Country dancing with a live band was enjoyed by dancers and onlookers alike. Lots of jollity and laughter was had by all.

Delicious homemade cakes and a lot of tea were gratefully consumed.

To end the lovely afternoon, we had the unveiling of the specially crafted wooden throne to commemorate the occasion, complete with Stone of Scone.

Thank you to everyone for attending and to all those who helped at and organized these great events.

Lynn Stevens

Coronation Fun and Games



A mix of games, arts & crafts, cakes and best decorated crown contestants

All photos above by Nicola O'Sullivan F.N.D Warriors Photography



Lynn and Sonia unveiling the throne made by Peter Broomfield



Country dancing with the St Catherine's music group

See Facebook: 'F.N.D Warriors Photography'



On Sunday 25th June Chris Stratta from The Leprosy Mission was our guest speaker.

He presented a short video of a run down clinical building, badly in need of renovation and a woman called Irene, who briefly told her story.

When Irene was a young girl God called her to be a leprosy nurse but her family were poor and didn't have the means to pay for her training.

She prayed to God to open a door and God did answer her prayer. She went to India's flagship hospital in Salur and now, after 37 years of service is preparing for retirement.

Irene and her generation of nurses are worried because expertise in leprosy is decreasing due to lack of new recruits and facilities. The young people are leaving for the bright lights elsewhere.

The plan is to renovate the crumbling old hospital and build a new training centre with two new classrooms with accommodation facilities.

Chris went on to explain that every donation will be doubled by an anonymous donor. Generous donations were made at the end of the service but anyone wishing to add to this may do so online or pass to Lorraine to forward onto TLM. In all, thanks to the 'doubling up' £1149 was raised by St Catherine's.

St Catherine's has supported TLM for decades now and your contributions are highly valued in the battle to reach those with the curable debilitating disease that is Leprosy. Thank you.

Lorraine Roberts (TLM Rep)

ONLINE SERVICES

THINGS THAT CAN GO TERRIBLY WRONG



PROBLEMS WITH THE SOUND



ACCIDENTAL SCREEN-SHARING OF PASTORALLY-SENSITIVE INFORMATION



INTERNET BREAKS AT CRUCIAL MOMENT

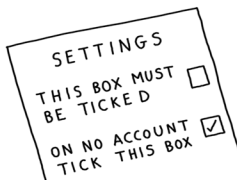


LINDA! HAVE YOU SEEN MY SPECTACLES?

FAILING TO MUTE THE CONGREGATION



ANIMALS RUNNING AMOK



THE APP HASN'T BEEN CONFIGURED



LIVE ARREST OWING TO IGNORING COPYRIGHT



INVASION BY ROWDY GROUP OF METHODISTS

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Please contact
me on
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You can leave
a message and I'll
call you back

Rachel

I charge
£12 per
hour

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Your family history is waiting to be revealed!

"I was adopted in the 60s - can you help me find my birth family?"

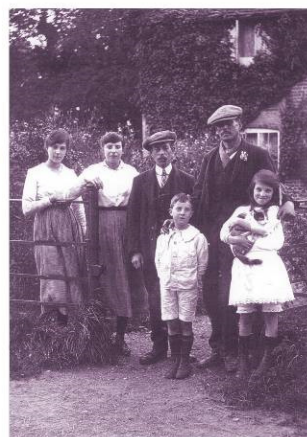
"In the early 1900s, my great Aunt disappeared leaving her two children to be brought up by her parents. What happened? Why did she abscond, or was her disappearance more sinister?"

"Are the Mendums of Bucks. related to those in Massachusetts, USA? How can I find out?"

"In the late 1800s, William Raven left Birmingham with the Army. He married and settled in Reading. Were his reasons financial, or to escape from something he'd rather forget?"

***Do you have unanswered questions about your family
or where you came from? I can help!***

Give Tracey Horrell a call on **07585 442185**
or find out more at www.genetracers.co.uk



The Thurleys, Three Mile Cross, c. 1918

Gene Tracers

Professional Genealogy Research

Goodbye Karen!

Karen Patrick, our efficient and much loved cafe manager has moved on to a new enterprise in Riseley. She will be very much missed – for her imaginative menus, for all the hours that she has contributed and for her kindness to customers and volunteers. She got to know many of Café Siena’s regular customers really well and often could predict what their orders might be before the order was even taken!

Karen has worked for us for nearly six years and during that time has invigorated the café, building bridges between the church and community, and providing a friendly, safe and welcoming space to meet.

It hasn’t always been easy! Covid was a real challenge and we all remember the restrictions on meeting up with each other. When the café was not allowed to open, Karen worked hard to offer a weekly Friday meal delivery to customer’s homes, with the volunteer drivers and delivery team always ready with a smile and a friendly chat.

This was followed by “outdoor table service only” at Café Siena, then socially distanced indoor service with limited numbers sitting together. Karen, with willing volunteers, managed to navigate these difficulties continuing to provide good food at reasonable prices always with a smile!

She has also been a huge supporter of St Catherine’s fundraising events, willingly offering her expertise and time at Summer and Christmas Fairs as well as catering for Special events like the Ceilidh and the Italian Night earlier this year.



Both events were hugely popular, attended by a mix of church folk and our friends in the community.

The Italian evening took place on St Catherine's Day, 29th April and was very successful! Nearly 40 people enjoyed a delicious three course Italian meal served by our Cafe Manager, Karen and her expert team.

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There was an Italian themed quiz, won by David and Lynn Bell. Did you know what the largest lake in Italy is? Or how old St Catherine was when she died? We all learnt a lot about Italy! We sang Happy Birthday to James and Terry in Italian – Tanti Auguri in case you are wondering!

A wine tasting trio of wines was served – there was some debate as to which wine was the best! Everyone had a great evening – many thanks to all those who worked so hard to make it so enjoyable. (If you are wondering, the quiz answers are Lake Garda and 33!)

Karen's final day was 21st July when many volunteers gathered together to say goodbye and to wish her well.

Sonia and Lynn gave her a beautiful flower basket, expertly made by Julie, and vouchers for gardening and theatre visits as a heartfelt thank you from all of us.

Good luck for the future, Karen – and also to your husband, David, who has helped on many occasions! You have been a real blessing to all of us at Café Siena.

Rosemary Cunningham & Sonia Ludford

Karen said

So, after almost six years, today is my last day at Cafe Siena. I am not good with words, but will have a go....

“In that six years the church has gone from being in vacancy, to having the lovely Gill, and back to being in vacancy.



Church wardens have come and gone, there has been a pandemic, and we have sadly lost some of our volunteers and customers.

The church is truly like a big caring family, and so many people give endless hours of their time to making the community a better place for all. I am glad to have been a small cog in that big wheel.

I would like to thank all the volunteers past and present for their hard work and commitment.

A special thank you must be for Sonia who works tirelessly with a smile on her face!

I wish the cafe every success for the future, and I will be back as a customer sometime!”

Best wishes - Karen

Café Siena

Serving the local community

Reduced Menu

While we are without a Café manager, we are only able to serve items from our printed menu

Our daily special meals are not available for the time being ,but please look at the blackboard by the hatch to see what is on offer

The Café can only happen because we have a cheery band of volunteers who freely give their time; so we appeal for your patience at busy periods

Our aim is to serve good food - not fast food

Thank you for your understanding

Part of St Catherine's Church, Wittenham Avenue, RG31 5LN

April saw the new committee take up their roles. At our meeting, we welcomed an amateur dramatics duo who entertained us with a series of entertaining sketches, including one originally performed by The Two Ronnies and an amusing monologue between a driver and his Satnav.

After all the national and community Coronation celebrations in early May, Tilehurst Triangle WI held their own celebration which was the highlight of the past 3 months.



Members came dressed in red, white or blue and we had a parade of our crowns with some very regal designs modelled. Our competition was a cake decorated for a royal occasion and we had many creatively designed cakes.

We were entertained, intrigued and amazed by our guest Neil Somerville, who presented some thought-provoking effects with a royal theme. We know from the famous Paddington sketch what the late Queen kept in her handbag. Five of our members placed an item from their own handbags into bags and Neil correctly matched the items to their correct owners, identified which king or queen playing cards had been randomly

selected from the pack and predicted the sentence from a copy of a Coronation newspaper.

A Right Royal Quiz devised by a member, Pauline Foskett, tested our knowledge of all matters royal or had 'royal' in their name, such as the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

We then enjoyed socialising with a glass of prosecco or soft drink and sampling the competition cakes.

The evening concluded with some communal singing led by Di Felton.

In June, we welcomed Austin Crabbe from Englefield Garden Centre who gave a very interesting talk focussing on pruning advice and tips. He welcomed questions from our members which gave the opportunity to find out more about their gardening queries.

The National Federation of Womens Institutes (NFWI) held their annual meeting in Cardiff at the end of May. I attended as a delegate representing our WI and 7 other Berkshire WIs.



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There was a great buzz of anticipation and excitement as WI members from around England and Wales gathered at St David's Hall in the centre of Cardiff, along with the members joining online in this hybrid NFWI Annual meeting.

As well as being an enjoyable and interesting experience with excellent speakers, I came away with two particular thoughts. Firstly, the WI provides friendship and support, especially at the local and federation level. We strive at Tilehurst Triangle WI to put this at the heart of our ethos.

My second thought is belonging to the WI means we are part of an organisation of 180,000 women throughout England and Wales which has much influence. It is at this national level that we can use our WI power and influence on government and other organisations. Yes, the WI is non-political and non-religious, but we can and do have influence.

The WI has been campaigning for 105 years. Keep Britain Tidy, started as a WI campaign. More recent WI Campaigns have been, More Midwives, End of Plastic Soup, the Need for more Stem Cell Donors, Care not Custody, SOS for Honeybees and many more.

Then there is this year's resolution, 'Clean Rivers for People and Wildlife' which was passed at the Cardiff meeting and will now form the basis of our new campaign.

The speakers gave shocking statistics about the state of our rivers. The River Wye, which 10 years ago was voted as one of the UK's favourite rivers, is now dying. Sadly, this is not an isolated case and our rivers have some of the worst

water quality in Europe with the most depleted river wildlife. Last year, 1.7 million hours of sewage discharging into our rivers was recorded. Intensive farming, in particular poultry farming and road pollution (run off from vehicle tyres,) also contribute significantly to the poor water quality which is contaminated by a chemical cocktail. Our rivers are in a dire state.

There is no easy fix. The WI resolution proposes that more designated bathing sites are approved as they are subject to strict water quality controls. This would be a start but as one of the speakers stated, water quality along the whole river needs addressing not just small stretches.

As many at St Catherine's will be, Tilehurst Triangle WI are sad to see Karen Patrick from Café Siena leaving.

Over the years, Karen and her team have always given us a very warm welcome each month at our Cuppa and a Chat.



We will also miss our annual Christmas lunch which was always superb. We wish Karen well.

Tilehurst Triangle WI wish everyone at St Catherine's a relaxing summer.

Ros Somerville
Tilehurst Triangle WI
tilehursttrianglewi@berkshirewi.co.uk

Sitting and thinking

As I sit on the bench in the back garden drinking a mug of coffee, the early morning sun and the gentle breeze are delightful.



The garden that Vivien and I have created is pleasing to my eye, with the plants and flora, and all the shades of green that you get at this time.

Some of the flowers that are out now, others will follow and are already in bud, they will be the further delights to look forward to in the coming weeks and months.

The birds, the bees, the insects and our tortoise are all looking for food and water that we have supplied for their needs.



To complete all of this, there is a peace, for the Holy Spirit is also present in our garden of Eden.

As I sit there it makes me think, perhaps the world and all that are in it, both the living and the being are like the body of Christ, the water, that all creation relies on resembles the blood of Christ and that these remind us of the of our commitments to Christ as we do in the Holy Communion.

And that's gets me to wondering what God is thinking looking down at His garden and all of His creation. Is it with pleasure or sadness, at what we humans have turned His garden into!

Unfortunately it is us, humans, who have caused so much damage to the eco system that God created, the world he created to enable all humanity and nature to live together in harmony.

So it is us, who now need to change our way of living and save the planet and all that exists on and in it, but we can not dilly dally as time is running out, and to delay may have irreversible consequences.

Peter



Around our Community

Another visit to a local shop by our reporter Sean



I met with owner Harry Singh who has been running the business for 4 and a half years.

It is a grocers selling a wide range of products as well as an off licence and sweet shop. He says he changes around the sweets he sells every few weeks to keep it more exciting for the children coming in to the shop.

Harry has donated items for our church fetes and other events in the past. He is happy to do this in the future and wants to feel part of the community.

Munchies Express set up a counter outside the shop during the Covid 19 lockdown so that the community still had somewhere to buy groceries locally.

I found Harry really easy to talk to and I am sure this is appreciated by his customers.

Sean East

Munchies is situated at 7 Royal Avenue, that's the Sainsbury's end

I hope that knowing more about our local businesses and the people who run them will encourage us all to support them. If you know of a local business that would like to feature in the next edition of this Parish Magazine please let me know.

Tony Bartlett - editor

Summer Fete Saturday 17th June

We had a very successful summer fete on 17th June. After a slow start, many friends and neighbours came to play games, snap up the bargains and enjoy delicious refreshments. Bill ran a pottery stall and showed us the high quality of his work. There were many beautiful plants for sale together with household and beauty products and many attractive gifts.

The raffle was as popular as ever, together with the tombola and some exciting games. Our talented bakers had provided a good assortment of cakes and refreshments were available – teas and cakes and burger and sausage meals outside. There were some beautiful pictures and cards for sale too.

It was great to see so many happy customers – lots of chat and good humour. And, we managed to make over £1300 for church funds.

Rosemary Cunningham



Chris and Anita set up the cake stall



Jocelyn and Elara take a break from helping mum set up the skittles



Barbecue ready to go

Tilehurst Afternoon Women's Institute

We have increased our membership recently and still welcome anyone interested in joining us.

A topical speaker recently was Margo Harris, a Jewish child refugee from Germany. Margo is 93 years of age and left Germany when she was 7, firstly to Paris then to the East End of London. She told the story of her family, and was inspirational, amusing and still swam most days and attended a Zumba class.

She has written a book entitled Vintage 1930 – Still Here. Her memoir is about one person's experience of personal change in her life and adaptation to living in a world of changing politics, war, and technology.

Our various Groups have been busy with members knitting and crocheting butterflies for the Climate change project erected on Whitchurch Bridge in May.



These were mainly created by our Knit and Natter group. The idea was for the butterfly creator to undertake one personal commitment, such as using less water in the shower or growing plants specially for wildlife etc .



Each month we have a Book Group. We read one person's choice each month, which we then discuss the following month and give it marks out of ten.

Additionally, there is a Quiz morning in Café Siena once a month. Susan Smyth devises an enormous variety of questions for us and a lot of fun and competitiveness is enjoyed.



We are currently planning some outings to places/gardens like Englefield, Caversham Court and possibly a little further afield and our programme will be including Birds of Australia, Life in rural South Africa and an English Courtroom.

Please do come along on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, 2.00pm at St Catherine's if you would like to meet us – no obligation to join on the first visit.

Diane Wakefield
tilehurstafternoonwi@berkshirewi.co.uk

St Catherine's Gardening Club



In gardening terms, what a year we have had! On the back of a summer of far too little rain in 2022, then a winter of spells of very low temperatures, my garden suffered many losses. How did yours do?

I have heard that even gardeners in London lost many plants.

I grow a lot of tender succulents and sustained a loss of about 30% of those. I heard of Salvias, Hebes and many other types of plants not able to survive the very cold spells we endured last winter.

Other people reported plants not making an appearance when they would normally would, in my patch, a well-loved Salvia Amistad took a very long time to make an appearance. It has flowers on it now, so I'm relieved.

I think this year I will be taking quite a lot of cuttings of plants we perceive to be a bit on the edge of hardiness.

So, how has the church gardens fared - well not so bad considering, I think. I try to put plants in the different borders that I think are "bombproof," maybe that has helped.

I am sad to find that we are even more Clematis short, compared with last year.

Our soil in the beds is heavy clay, which does have good nutrient levels, but the clematis are hampered by the lack of openness in the soil and the amount of rubble in the borders.

Clematis do like a lot of water and that is difficult for the garden team to constantly deliver.



I do have some small Honeysuckle in the pipeline to fill the gaps. I hope they will do well in the church areas.

Our roses have been flowering their socks off this summer, so Jo's secateurs have been busy keeping the shrubs full of new flowers. I hope you look at them and appreciate their beauty.



Another area that has been flowering its socks off is the buttress bed that Sheila Firth used to tend on behalf of her house group.

Have you noticed the Alstroemeria? Quite floriferous whenever I look at them. I really didn't know they were so tough - but Sheila must have! What a plantswoman she was.

The bed in the corner of the south lawn has had its usual plants showing off, the penstemon will flower all summer long now, the Alliums have been and gone. The Tease has come up again, but seeded in slightly different places, not always in an area I appreciate, though.

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Unfortunately, we have been battling with an attack of running bamboo from a neighbour's garden.

This really is a pernicious problem, don't be tempted to grow it in your garden. We don't need to feed many Pandas in Tilehurst, so we can do without it!

There have been a lot of tiny alpine strawberries in the corner bed, a gift from a church goer, so thank you from myself and all the wildlife that benefit from it.

Talking about wildlife in the garden, I hope the pollinators and bugs have enjoyed using the new, prettier bug hotel.

Chris Addison installed the upgraded provision. There is a space in the bottom, for use by a hedgehog if one decides to put it to good use. I hope to make it even more hog - friendly soon.

On the top of the hotel, I've managed to install a green roof. (it's a mat-like carpet of low growing plants, usually succulents). I've wanted to add one, just anywhere, if I could, for many years. So, this year my green roof dreams came true.

It was lovely to see the sedums in flower even after a short time. They are so good for pollinators, add to a greater level of biodiversity and the general health of our grounds.

Another dream that Jo and I have had for sometime, is that we should be able to increase the garden team - well we just have.

We have one person on board already and another person to join us soon. Hallelujah to that!

Hazel Newman



Bug Hotel mark 1.



Bug Hotel mark 2.



The Sedum roof

Would you like to help adults learn to read in your community in Reading?

Read Easy is looking to launch a new group in Reading in the next 6 months. We spoke to Read Easy Regional Adviser Michelle Baker from the Southern Region, to hear about their new volunteer Management Team vacancies.

“We are looking to help adults in Reading who need reading support. We know that 6,068 adults in Reading alone can’t read or struggle with everyday reading, and we’re passionate about transforming more lives in the community through our proven, confidential programme of free, one-to-one, volunteer-led adult reading coaching.

“Becoming a Management Team volunteer for Read Easy is fun and fulfilling yet requires commitment and passion. You’ll be given lots of support, meet a diverse range of people, and be part of a genuinely life-changing organisation. From experience, we know that learning to read really does change lives and being part of that process is special.

The group will need a Team of at least 6 members covering a number of roles to get the group up and running. “Volunteering as a Team Leader is an exciting chance to play a key role in bringing your community together, and to make a real difference in your area,”

Michelle enthuses. “Whether you’ve got existing skills you’d like to put to good use, or are looking to develop new ones, being a Team Leader can be a great

chance to learn something new. Other key roles include: Treasurer, Volunteer Recruiter, Referrals Networker Publicity Organiser, Administrator.

Read Easy UK currently supports 53 affiliated groups across the country, stretching from Plymouth to Leeds and Hull. In the last year, groups have been started in Swindon & West Berkshire, South & East Wiltshire and further groups will soon be established Reading and East Berkshire. We have big plans for the year ahead and hope to be running as many as 90 groups by September 2023, with a focus in the South, where there is a strong need for one-to-one adult reading coaching.



“The stark reality is that 2.4m adults in the UK cannot read, while 2.5m struggle to read,” Michelle Baker underlines. “On a practical level, this means that even carrying out everyday tasks can be challenging, if not impossible.

Many of our new readers have never been to the doctor as they’re too embarrassed to have to read and fill in forms. Being unable to read and write is often associated with depression, isolation and even higher mortality. Sadly, statutory provision by local authority adult education does not look

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likely to improve, with funding increasingly cut, and very little opportunity for those at very early levels.”

“Even where such classes are available in our area it can be challenging for potential readers to come forward for help in a classroom environment where they are likely to have to fill in forms and explain their difficulties to staff.

We know from experience that people who cannot read are nervous and embarrassed about joining adult learning groups.

This is the motivation behind the Read Easy model: to provide accessible, free, and confidential one-to-one reading coaching wherever the need is greatest. And this is why we need your help!

“To be an effective part of the Team, volunteers will be committed and enjoy using their own initiative. Ideally, they will also be confident, as well as passionate about helping others and bringing their community together,” Michelle tells us.

The impact of learning to read is tangible for both volunteers and new readers as Michelle concludes by explaining. “The phrase we hear from our readers time-and-time again is ‘life-changing’. But for our volunteers too the process of helping adults learn to read can have a profound effect on their lives.

If you’d like to play a key part in helping to transform the lives of adults near you, while developing existing skills and learning new ones in a supportive, fun environment, then why not get in touch?”



To learn more about becoming a Read Easy Management Team volunteer in Reading, please contact Michelle Baker michelle@readeasy.org.uk.



**Looking for friendship
or company?**

Why not come along to

Tuesday get Together

Serving the community

Drop in and meet old friends and make new ones

A warm welcome awaits. Tea & Coffee provided

**Tuesdays 10 am – 12 noon
in Café Siena**

**St Catherine's Church Centre,
Wittenham Avenue, Tilehurst, RG31 5LN**

For more information email
info@stcatherines-tilehurst.org.uk

TgT

We have been Getting Together on Tuesday mornings for almost four years now and are delighted to welcome newcomers. So if you know of anyone that would benefit from joining us then please do point them in our direction!

Lorraine Roberts

Musings from Phil French

Pigs might (let us) fly?

An airport near Amsterdam had a BIG safety problem - too many geese and other birds in the flight-paths of aircraft. Some plants in the area were attracting birds.

Weedkillers weren't simple. The airport got 200 pigs. They kept eating the plants. The problem virtually vanished! True story! "Pigs might fly?" We-e-ell, they can HELP.

When things change

Researchers are interested these days in group psychology. One recent project selected animals from a group - for their depth of involvement. Some were "insiders", some were relative "outsiders".

Conditions changed. The insiders didn't really want to change. The outsiders coped better. (Google for herd solve problems "Federica Amici")

Are we like this? In business, clients change their ways. Medics get new problems. Churches get new vicars(!). Change is everywhere!

One secret seems to be - "love your outsiders" (up to a point!).

Change is dangerous, rather obviously. Care needed. But resisting change also has dangers. In my work experience, we often needed a FRIENDLY tussle between the oldies and the fans of the new.

Without that, we failed to cope with change, or we failed to deal with a few mistakes in the new schemes.

Do your Homework For you?

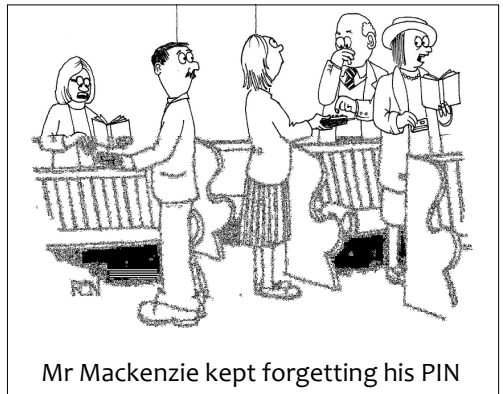
Big firms are investing big money in Artificial Intelligence (AI). Beware! Bias? ChatGPT (from OpenAI) is one trendy AI application. You can ask it almost anything, and you get seemingly learned, human-like replies (although the FREE version is not quite up to date on facts).

Some students have used ChatGPT to write their homework for them! (Would YOU want someone to lift your gym training weights for you?)

A few years ago, Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, said:- "ChatGPT is incredibly limited, but good enough at some things to create a misleading impression of greatness."

ChatGPT typically "scans" huge quantities of accessible data. With Impressive, even useful results, and it's easier to use than you might think. But if there's a shortage of wisdom out there, IT HAS NO MAGICAL WISDOM OF IT'S OWN! Might it even pass on some popular foolish ideas?

My feeling? CHATGPT SEARCHES MUCH MORE WIDELY THAN WE CAN, BUT IT'S NOT A JEEVES!



Beware those modern choruses



The Rectory,
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

I am afraid we shall have to agree to disagree on yet another topic – although I suspect the list of items that we agree to agree on would be considerably shorter. I like to think my appreciation of hymns resembles a connoisseur of fine wines savouring a grand cru claret, yours seems to resemble a Russian female tractor driver who is a Hero of the Nation.

We at St James the Least are more than happy with Hymns Ancient & Modern – the original 1861 edition, naturally - the later editions display a dangerous tendency towards modernism. Sadly, St. Paul was not able to sing Onward, Christian soldiers, but I am sure he regretted the fact that it had yet to be written. The hymns our grandparents pretended to sing when they were in church are quite good enough for the ones we pretend to sing when we sit in the same pews.

At least when we come to the last verse, we know that we can then sit down, mission accomplished. The last time I attended your church, just as I saw the last words and therefore the finishing line of one of your choruses coming into sight, we were told it would be splendid to sing the thing another three times. At least it gave me another analogy to use when I next preached on eternity in hell.

And your method of singing would plunge our congregation into an existential crisis. What do they do with their hands when they don't have books to hold and are obliged to look at a screen? To be deprived of being able to hold a book in church is like a smoker who is trying to give up being unable to grasp a cigarette when in the pub.

The ladies do not know whether to clasp their handbags, which then makes it look as if they suspect the rest of the congregation of theft, or to hold some flowers, which looks a little too matrimonial. The men experiment with putting hands in pockets, which they then realise looks scruffy, so they try to hold on to the pew in front, which is inevitably too low, so they have to adopt some form of half crouch, which makes them look as if they have recently had hernia operations.

Your choral tradition – if I can flatter it with such a description – also seems to require half an hour before the Service spent singing for our congregation, that time is more usefully spent discussing Government incompetence, livestock prices and why Miss Threlfall always wears a red felt hat with her tangerine coat.

Should we ever have a joint Service, I can't imagine how we'll all get through the first hymn together.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

St Catherine's Centre

Church and Hall regular bookings listed below
To book Church or Hall contact Eve Combes
✉ hall@stcatherines-tilehurst.org.uk
OR 📞 07969 423 232.

Monday

Breakfast club - 7.30am-8.45am (term time)
After School Club - 3:30pm-6.00pm (term time)
Exercise Class - 7.00pm-8.00pm (term time)
Yoga - 8.15-9.15pm

Tuesday

Breakfast club - 7.30am-8.45am (term time)
Childminders Drop-in 10.00-11.30am (term time)
Seated Exercise 1.00pm -2.00pm
Tuesday Get Together - 10.00am-12.00noon
After School Club - 3:30pm-6.00pm (term time)
W.I. - 2.00pm-4.00pm (3rd Tuesday)
AA - 7.00pm-9.30pm

Wednesday

Breakfast club - 7.30am-8.45am (term time)
Communion Service 9.00am-10.00am
After School Club - 3:30pm-6.00pm (term time)
Vivace Voices 1.45pm-3.45pm
Kettle Bells - 6.30pm-7.30pm
Mothers' Union - 7.30-9.30pm (2nd Wednesday)
W.I. - 7.00pm-10.00pm (3rd Wednesday)

Thursday

Breakfast club - 7.30am-8.45am (term time)
Zumba 9.30am-10.45am
Cafe Siena - 10.00am-2.00pm
Over 60s Exercise Class - 1.15pm-2.15pm
After School Club - 3:30pm-5.30pm (term time)
Menopause Yoga Class 7.30pm -8.30pm
Trefoil - 7.30-9.30pm (4th Thursday)

Friday

Tots Praise - 9.15am (term time)
Glow Tots Sensory - 9.30am-12.30pm
Cafe Siena - 10.00am-2.00pm
Friday Friends - 2.00-4.30pm
Pick'n'Mix (Youth Group) - 7.45-9.15 pm
(alternate Fridays Term Time)

Saturday

Yoga - 9.30-10.30am and 10.45-11.45am
Crafty Space - 1.30-5.30 pm (once a Month)
Bowls Club - 7.00-9.00 pm

RG31 - The Parish Magazine of Tilehurst St Catherine & Calcot St Birinus

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Editor:

Tony Bartlett 📞 0118 967 8659

Assistant Editor:

Rosemary Cunningham 📞 0118 942 0713

Advertising:

Richard Canning 📞 0118 942 8238

All details and events are correct
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time of going to print.

The P.C.C. and Editors are not
necessarily in agreement with the
views expressed by contributors
in this magazine.

We welcome contributions of
articles or letters for future issues
from anyone living in, or connected
with the parish.

All contributions for the next
(Autumn) edition must be received
by the editors by 24th September

Contributions may be sent to:
magazine@stcatherines-tilehurst.org.uk

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The Anglican Parish of Tilehurst St Catherine & Calcot St Birinus

ST CATHERINE OF SIENA

Wittenham Avenue, Tilehurst, RG31 5LN

www.stcatherines-tilehurst.org.uk

www.facebook.com/st.catherines.tilehurst

Please check these websites for up-to-date information on services and other events



We are 'live-streaming' our 10.00 am Sunday services so that they can be viewed via our Facebook page. Simply go to: www.facebook.com/st.catherines.tilehurst (you do not need an account to view - if asked to login or join, you can click 'Not Now'). Once shown on Facebook, all our videos can be found again on our Web Site: www.stcatherines-tilehurst.org.uk

Every Sunday, The Ten O'clock Service - varies in style and contents each week, but will always be 'family friendly'. It will contain praise, teaching, communion and usually include a time of sharing what God is doing amongst us.

Refreshments afterwards in the Hall.

On Wednesdays at 9.00 am - there's Holy Communion in church, everybody welcome.


Who's Who in the Parish


Whilst we're currently without a vicar, for initial enquiries regarding baptisms funerals and weddings, please email us at info@stcatherines-tilehurst.org.uk.



Licensed Lay Minister

Mike Heather


 0118 962 4852


 michaelheather@btinternet.com



Licensed Lay Minister

Tony Bartlett


 0118 967 8659

 tony.bartlett.ccc@ntlworld.com



Churchwarden


Caroline Heron

 caroline.heron123@btinternet.com



Churchwarden

Lynn Stevens

 07917 132 519

 lynn@stevensfamily.co.uk