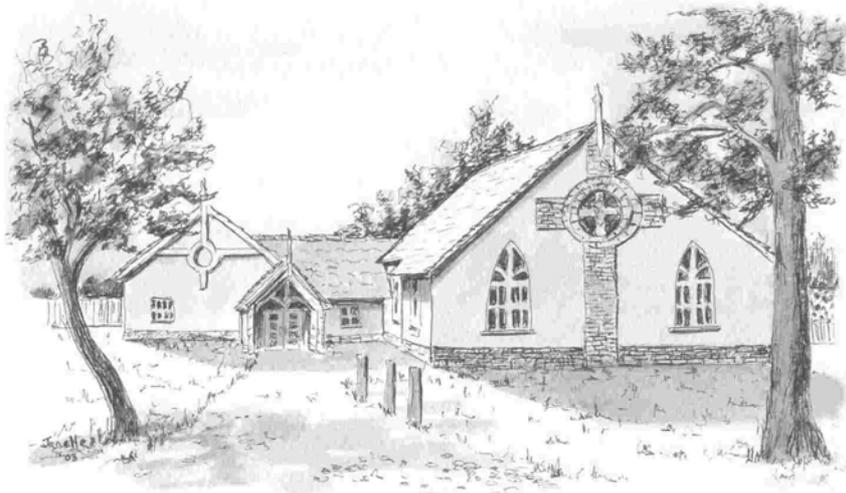


Sonning Parish Magazine



Serving the Communities
of Sonning and Charvil



25p

May 2006

The Parish of Sonning

The ancient parish of Sonning, originally extending from Sonning Common to Sandhurst was one of the great blocks of land handed over to the Church in the 7th century. In 909 A.D. Sonning with Ramsbury, became a separate bishopric, the Bishop of Ramsbury/ Sonning maintaining a riverside Hall in the village. In 1075 the see was transferred to Old Sarum, ultimately Salisbury, whose bishops had their own Palace on the same site as the Saxon Hall until 1574, when the manor was transferred to the Crown.

St Andrew's Church in the heart of the village was founded in Saxon times - probably by Birinus, first bishop of Dorchester-on-Thames. It was largely rebuilt in 1852, during the incumbency of Canon Hugh Pearson; it was he who founded the Sonning Parish Magazine in 1869.

The White Hart Hotel, now known as The Great House, and partly 17th century, stands on the site of older buildings including the home of 'Elias the Ferryman' mentioned in a deed of 1100. The French Horn Hotel, in Sonning Eye, was built in the 1880s in front of the original old inn - now Bridge House - and its farm buildings. The Bull Inn, belonging to the Church, was originally known as Church House, a guest house for pilgrims to medieval St Sarik's Chapel in St Andrew's. Also adjoining the church is Deanery Garden one of Sir Edwin Lutyen's best-known country houses built at the turn of the century, just above the site of the ancient residence of the Deans of Salisbury who regularly visited Sonning, the parish being a 'Dean's Peculiar'.

Sonning Mill produced a regular supply of flour from Saxon time until 1969, after which it was converted into a 'Dinner Theatre', the first of its kind in Britain. The Pearson Hall is the principal venue for village functions

Within the village boundaries lie the Reading Blue Coat School at Holme Park (once the home of the Lord of the Manor) Sonning Church of England Primary School, King George's Field and other sports grounds, and Reading University Farm - all of which help to preserve the rural atmosphere of Sonning, the centre of which is now a conservation area.

The civil parish of Charvil is of relatively recent origin but the land on which it lies has long been part of the ecclesiastical parish of Sonning. In the 18th and 19th centuries it consisted of Charville Farm and a few cottages, which lay between the villages of Sonning and Twyford and adjacent to the London to Bath highway.

The development of Charvil began between the two World Wars, particularly after the new A4 road was constructed in the 1920s by-passing Twyford, and was accelerated after 1945. To meet the needs of this increasingly large community, St Patrick's dual-purpose Church and Hall was consecrated and opened in 1952; it remains within the ecclesiastical parish of Sonning. It was considerably extended and refurbished in 2001.

St Andrew's Sonning Contacts

Clergy: Vicar	Canon C. G. Clarke, The Vicarage, Thames St, Sonning	969 3298
Associate Vicar	Rev Michael Forrer, 6 Park View Drive South, Charvil	934 1989
Licensed Lay Ministers	Mr D. G. Sims, Vine Cottage, Pound Lane, Sonning	969 3151
	Mr R. J. Peters, Elm Gables, Parkway Drive, Sonning	969 3589
Churchwardens:		
	Mr Bob Hine, 28 Glebe Lane, Sonning, RG4 6XH	969 8653
	Mrs Jan Hammond	926 2365
	Mr J. M. Stansfield (Emeritus), 3 Strathmore Drive, Charvil	934 1762
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	Charvil: Mr C M Easton, 8 Park View Drive South, Charvil	934 0795
Parochial Church Council:		
Secretary:	Mr Mark Jordan, 12 Manor Wood Gate, Lower Shiplake, RG9 3BY	940 1431
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Forthcoming Events

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May 4	Mission Commissioning Service, St Andrew's	R
May 5	SWMCLive music night with 'Allen Howard'	R
May 6	Children's Challenge	21
May 6	S&SES Walk on the Wild Side	30
May 9	Little Fishes & Toddlers Group	24
May 10	Parish Council A.G.M.	28
May 13	Children's Crafts & other messy stuff	21
May 13	Christian Aid concert, St Patrick's	22
May 13	S&SES Walk on the Wild Side	30
May 20	Lawn Tennis Club Open Day	28
May 7	BBQ lunch, St Andrew's Vicarage garden	R
May 27	Sonning Regatta	R
May 27	SWMC Live Music (local band) and Fish & Chips	R
May 28	Elegant picnic	R
May 28/29	SWMC Pavement café	R
May 28/29	Scarecrow trail & open gardens	29
June 2	SWMC Live music night	R
Jun 4	Christian Aid Family Party, Pearson Hall	23
Jun 11	STA Regatta, Ligugé, France	R
Jun 16	SWMC Quiz & BBQ	R
Jun 18	S&SES Summer Luncheon	29
Jun 21	Pearson Hall A.G.M.	22
Jul 7	SWMC Live music night	R
Jul 8	STA French wine & cheese tasting, Pearson Hall	24

Deadline, June 2006 Magazine is 4.00 p.m. Thursday, 25th May.

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Regular Services

The Parish Church

Sundays	8 am	Holy Communion (Prayer Book)
	10.30 am	Family Service, first Sunday of the month Parish Eucharist, second, fourth and fifth Sundays Matins, third Sunday
	6.30 pm	Evensong, except third Sunday of the month, when it will be Holy Communion with the laying on of hands for those who wish it.
Wednesdays	10 am	Holy Communion at St Andrew's

St Patrick's Charvil

Sundays	9.30 am	Family Service, first Sunday of the month Holy Communion, second and fourth Sundays Worship Service other Sundays Sunday School 9.30 am except first Sunday of the month
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If you would like to arrange a Thanksgiving for the birth of a child, a Baptism (please give at least one month's notice of your intention), a Marriage or a Funeral, please contact the Vicar. Please note that the Vicar hopes to take Monday as a day off, although urgent matters will of course be dealt with.

The Vicar's Letter

Mission

I hope that with this addition of our magazine you have received a programme for our Mission, which takes place between 4th and 14th May. I am very grateful to all those who have offered to help with this mission and especially those who have offered hospitality. This Mission could be a great opportunity for us to grow in faith. I hope by now that you know the theme is "Finding Your Way...?" There will be lots of opportunities for us to meet with the Franciscans who are conducting the Mission but thought it might help if I wrote a bit about the main events to which everyone is invited.

Our Parish Mission, which is being led by the Franciscans, starts on Thursday 4th May at 8.00pm in St. Andrew's. The Bishop of Reading will commission Sister Chris, Brother Martin and Pam Saunders at that service and will be preaching and celebrating Holy Communion. This is a very important occasion for our parish and I do hope you will be present. It will be the first visit of Bishop Stephen, which adds even more significance to the occasion.

After the service there will be an opportunity to meet the Mission Team and the Bishop over a drink.

On Sunday 7th the Mission Team will be helping to lead and preaching at our Sunday Services. Sister Chris will preach at the 8.00am Holy Communion and at the 9.30am Family Service. Brother Martin will preach at the 10.30am Family Service and again at Evensong. There will be a BBQ lunch at 12.30pm in the Vicarage garden. There is no charge for this but please obtain a ticket from the back of either church by Sunday 30th April so we know how many people to cater for.

On Wednesday 10th at 8.00pm there will be a Taize style service in St. Andrew's and during this there will be an opportunity for laying on of hands. It will follow a similar pattern to the regular Taize Services we hold on Sunday evenings.

The Mission finishes at lunchtime on Sunday 14th May. The Franciscans will preach at the regular morning services that day and there is a lunch (details elsewhere in this magazine) to raise funds for Christian Aid in the Pearson Hall. I hope this lunch together with the Christian Aid Concert in St. Patrick's on the Saturday evening, 13th May, will help boost the amount we raise for Christian Aid this year and you will be able to support it.

Every week day during the Mission, except on Wednesday 10th, there will be Morning Prayer at 8.00am and Holy Communion at 8.30am in St. Andrew's. These Services are open to anyone who is able to attend and I hope you will be able to join us to start each day of our Mission with prayer and Holy Communion. There will also be Midday Prayer in St. Andrew's at 12.00noon each day and Evening Prayer at 5.00pm.

If you did not have the opportunity to sign up for one of the House Groups which meet most evenings during the Mission please speak to Chris Clarke who will arrange for you to join a group.

Please pray for Sister Chris, Brother Martin and Pam during our Mission and do please support all the events you can.

Love and prayers

Chris

From the Diary

Baptisms

26th March. Amelie Momo Clarke

2nd April. Lucy Florence Simpson, Erik Mark Haines, Ashley Angela Haines, Alan Perry Haines, William Raymond Thomas Haines.

Weddings

1st April Terry Schofield to Polly Anna Nassif.

Robin Brutton RIP

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of The Revd. Robert (Robin) Springett Brutton on Easter Eve. A Thanksgiving Service for this much loved former Vicar of Sonning will be held in St. Andrew's Church at 2.30pm on Friday 28th April. Robin was Vicar of Sonning from 1965 to 1974 and I know many remember his time here with great affection. I have asked Malcolm Stansfield to write about Robin in next month's magazine.

Holy Week and Easter

I want to record my thanks to all who made Holy Week and Easter so moving and memorable. It was the best Holy Week I can remember since we moved to Sonning and it was very good to see so many people at all the Church Services. The flowers were breathtaking and I know you will join me in thanking those who donated them and those who spent so many hours arranging them. The Concert on Good Friday evening raised £600 for the Friends of St. Andrew's and it was wonderful to see 350 of you at the 10.30am Service on Easter Day.

Flower Festival & Scarecrows

There will be a Flower Festival in St. Andrew's Church on the May Bank Holiday Weekend (28th - 29th) and Scarecrows in the Village the same weekend. This year the money raised is going towards the refurbishment of the children's playground on the Recreation Ground. I do hope you will support this and bring lots of your friends with you!

Chris

St. Patrick's Viewpoint

It is said that "truth is stranger than fiction", however in recent times there are those who would like us to believe that fiction is truth.. The contest between the writers of "Holy Blood and the Holy Grail" and "The Da Vinci Code" illustrates my point, both of which are pure fantasy. As Pope Benedict XVI commented just before Easter "a slick campaign of propaganda is spreading an inane apologia of evil, a senseless cult of Satan".

It was G.K. Chesterton who wrote that "when a man stops believing in God he doesn't then believe in nothing, he believes in anything". That is the real danger, that of the 40million readers of "The Da Vinci Code", many will not discriminate between fantasy and fact and nature abhors a vacuum. Speculation about the relationships of Jesus with his followers male and female adds nothing to the truth of the Gospels experienced by thousands living predominantly in the West. Some have, of course, been misguided as at the time of the Crusades, or the Inquisition or the Divine Right of Kings in the 16th/17th Centuries. As the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams said in his Easter Sermon "we have become suspicious of the power of words so much so that we assume the truth of the Resurrection is spin of some kind and that the Christian Faith is a series of "conspiracies cover ups". Thousands and millions of people down the ages have found through the experience of their Christian faith the essence of the life and ministry of Jesus as portrayed in the four Gospels to be true. Our Christian faith is not based on speculation but on the three creeds (the Apostles, the Nicean, and the Athanasian) which were hammered out in the third and fourth centuries A.D. They refuted the many heresies put about at that time. The recently translated "Gospel of Judas", which originated in the Gnostic heresy (Greek in origin) propagated at that time, is a case in point.

We now, post Easter, look forward to the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit (Whit Sunday) which is God's gift to help us live inspirational lives for the benefit of others and for the world which desperately need the fruits of the Spirit to bring peace, reconciliation, identify hope and salvation to individuals, communities and nations.

Love and blessings,

Michael and Family

The Franciscans are coming

We asked the three members of the Franciscan Mission Team to introduce themselves to us. Here is what they said:

From Sister Chris CSF, who is leading our Mission

I can honestly say that I've never worked as closely with a Parish in the planning of a Mission, and I haven't been caught up in the last minute stresses as I am now. But this is the first time I've been on email for a Mission event. So I can really say I feel excited and energised by the whole thing; and I'm delighted we all seem to be pulling together as we work towards May 4th.

I don't know about looking forward to coming. In many ways, I feel I already live in Sonning and Charvil, and it's an incredibly good feeling!

I was born in Twickenham and spent much of my young life in Teddington, Middlesex. When I left school, I trained in ladies' tailoring, and had a job for many years as a children's tailoress. I do very little sewing now although I'm supposed to make our Franciscan habits.

In 1989, I began to test my vocation with the Community of Saint Francis and lived for a year in the Convent in Somerset. My move to Newcastle-under-Lyme was one of mixed blessings but it was here that I began learning Braille. Birmingham became my next home, and life took a sudden leap when I got a part-time job working with deaf blind people.

This has continued to occupy me in East London where I've lived for the past 8 years. Having read Brother Martin's write-up, I notice he has typed "happy" 3 times. I would say that adequately describes my present life as I share a Community house with a Sister and 2 Brothers, one of whom is Martin.

In secular life, I remember wondering how dull the life of a Religious might be. In fact, it's packed with variety: preaching, Missions, ministry of many kinds; and most important, it provides a deep sustaining well of prayer which forms the absolute core of our existence.

From Brother Martin SSF

I am looking forward to the Mission in May, and I hope that it will be a time of great spiritual value to all of us.

I joined the Society of Saint Francis in 1948. I realise that this was a very long time ago, and yet the years seem to have passed all too quickly. One of the wonderful things about being a friar is that one doesn't have time to get bored. After serving my time as a novice in the Community I made my vows in 1951. I was then a member of our Friary at Hilfield in Dorset.

In 1956 I went to Chichester Theological College, and I was ordained priest in Salisbury Cathedral in 1958. The Church of England always seems to have fewer clergy than it really needs, and so within a few months I was asked by the Bishop to be priest-in-charge of two village parishes, where I had 8 happy years.

In 1966 the Community allowed me to take up school work for a while, since this was one of my great interests. I worked as a chaplain and teacher in two schools in the midlands, until 1971 when I was asked to go to Cambridge to become vicar of the parish in that city which had been in the care of the Franciscan Brothers for some years.

I was initially hesitant about taking on this responsibility, as I felt very ill equipped for such work. In the event I soon came to terms with the new job, and I spent 14 very happy years in this capacity. But I was also able to continue with some school work alongside the ministry of a parish priest, as I was appointed part-time chaplain of Saint John's College School.

In October 1985 I entered upon my first (and only) sabbatical, and I went to Jerusalem for 6 months. This was a wonderful experience. I ministered as a priest at Saint George's Anglican Cathedral, with plenty of time to visit the holy places. This gave me a great affection for the Holy Land, and I have spent many enjoyable holidays there over the years.

In 1986 I went to our Franciscan house in Scunthorpe, and I became Provincial Secretary of the Order. But in 1997 we closed our house there, and I returned to Cambridge.

Over the years, and concurrently with my various jobs, I have taken part in a good many parish missions. I strongly believe that we should share our faith with others, and missions give us very good opportunities for doing exactly that. For the last 7 years I have in fact been the Mission Secretary of the Sisters' and Brothers' Communities, which means that I have a hand in the administration of this work.

Unfortunately the Order has lost a good many of its members in recent years, and we are not attracting many novices. So we have had to curtail some of our activities, and it was decided last year to terminate our work in Cambridge. As a result I moved again, and this time to Stepney, where I live in our very happy 'family' which consists of two Sisters and two Brothers. I seem to contract quite a number of away engagements, and I am also involved in one of the parishes in East London.

I hope that this helps you to discover who I am. But words are inadequate, and you may find that I am a very different kind of person from the one you are expecting. Anyway, I am looking forward to meeting you all.

God bless you all.

From Pam Saunders

I have lived in Chelmsford, Essex since 1966. My church is All Saints, Chelmsford and is only about 20 minutes walk from the cathedral. When I arrived in 1966 it was a dual-purpose building but became the hall when our new church was dedicated in 1970. I spend many happy hours here both praying and working and currently in my second term as church warden. In the last four years we have had two interregnums, so that has kept me very busy!

In the early seventies we had a parish Mission led by the Franciscans and it was then that I began to explore the possibility of becoming a Franciscan Tertiary. I was Noviced in 1976 and Professed in 1978. I have found this to be fulfilling and sustaining. With the love and encouragement of my fellow Tertiaries, I have been able to do things which I would not have thought possible and would not have had opportunity to do in parish life.

I am a widow, my husband died nearly four years ago with lung cancer although he had never smoked. I have two sons, both happily married now in spite of both going through the trauma of divorce. In consequence of this I have numerous grandchildren!!

I look forward very much to being with you in Sonning and Charvil for your Parish Mission and am keeping you in my prayers. Please pray for us too.

A Challenge for the Children + Some Other Messy Stuff!

On both Saturdays of the Mission we have special activities lined up for all school-aged children (if you are not old enough to be at school you will still be welcome but you will have to bring a grown up along with you!)

Saturday 6 May: The Children's Challenge from 12.30pm to 6pm at the Reading Blue Coat School. Starting with a picnic lunch we will spend the afternoon in series of outdoor activities in the grounds and woods around the school, so wear old clothes and a strong pair of trainers that you can get muddy. At 5.30pm there will be a camp fire service to which everyone will be welcome to join us. Children need to register before the day, details from Bob Peters on 969 3589.

Saturday 13 May: Children's Crafts and Other Messy Stuff! is just what it says. Again it is designed for school-aged children but younger ones will be welcome if they have a grown up to look after them. It's at Sonning CofE School from 10am - 12 noon. Hopefully we can make some great things to display in church the next day! There's no need to register, just turn up in your old clothes!

Christian Aid Concert

Hello folks, it's me, recovering from the Songs of Praise. I cannot tell why the Spirit of God left me to the mercy of the organ grinder but I had great faithfulness that as I was dearly panting with exhaustion and trying to be still and seek something that would help me shine and find a channel of some kind where I could see the sea and sky and could it be that some great Jehovah would guide me through to the end of the day where I'd be given a bit of peace?

What is all the drivel about I hear you say? Well work it out for yourself, what we sung is all in there, all 14 of 'em.. Answers on a postcard to Joanna, St Paddy's Charvil, first prize is a handful of mission badges and a pocketful of bracelets.

Speaking of Mission, I'd better get on with what the boss (who's reckons he's recovered from his jet lag, but given the preponderance of bum notes at the Easter service I have me doots), told me to say.

It's the Mission from 4th - 14th May, and as part of it we are doing the Christian aid Concert again. We've got a whizbang concert for you again this year, lots of local talent absolutely tensed up and rairin' to entertain you with a positive cornucopia of song, dance and laughter. So get on and buy your ticket (only a fiver from that nice Mr Hine and his social sidekick Mr Ashman) and get down there, we don't want an empty seat in the house and we definitely want to get more dosh for the Weak Christians than we raised last year (£460 is my memory serves me rightly). So just remember:

The Christian Aid Concert, St Patrick's Charvil, Saturday 13th May, 7.00 pm to 9.30pm (ish). Entertainment, Refreshments and a Raffle: All proceeds to Christian Aid

Tickets £5 from Bob Hine or Nigel Ashman (*children free*). *You can pay on the door, but get there early to avoid swinging from the rafters.*

So how about Finding Your Way to St Paddy's on the 13th? See you there.

Joanna (the St Patrick's Pianner)

Pearson Hall - AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Pearson Hall will be held at the Hall on Wednesday 21st June at 7.30 for 8.00 pm. You are invited to attend or send a representative, and to take part in the elections. Light refreshments will be served.

Colin McEwen

Bank Holiday - Sunday 28th & Monday 29th May

A plant stall, in aid of the Children's Playground reinvigoration scheme, will be situated outside 'Sonningdene', Pearson Road, on both days from 11a.m. to 5 p.m. Contributions of potted plants and herbs will be gratefully received, especially if they are unusual, during the previous week.

For offers of help in manning the stall, please phone Dawne Vincent on 969 7370.

Dawne Vincent

Christian Aid Fundraiser

**Children, Grown Ups and Everyone is
Invited to a
Family Party with a Bolivian Theme**

**Sandwiches, Cakes,
Tea, Coffee, Soft Drinks
Music, Dance, Fun!!!**

**Sunday June 4th, 2006
Doors open 11.30am until 5.00pm. Pearson Hall, Sonning.**

**Traditional Bolivian Dance Shows
12.30, 2.00pm and 3.30pm**

Fairtrade Goods & Home-made Cakes will be on sale all day.

**All proceeds will go to Christian Aid who helps people who are
living below the poverty line.**

Enquiries please call Sue Butler-Sejas (tel: 0118 969 6327)

The Monday Club

Traidcraft, who presented a stall at the club, is a fair price trading organisation for the third world. Their policy is trade, not aid, and it seems an eminently sensible way to relieve poverty. We all know that, if cash is given, many sticky fingers get involved before the needy is helped. Traidcraft gives help yet maintains dignity. If the supermarkets would get involved many problems could be settled by each of us spending a few more coppers that we would probably not miss. It is said that one percent more trade with Africa would avoid starvation.

R C A

Readers email Addresses

I am frequently asked for the email address of a member of the parish, which I do not normally have. However, if you are prepared to let me have yours, I am prepared to make and keep a list for reference purposes. If you

would like your email address included, please email me at david@dgsims.force9.co.uk.

David Sims

Little Fishes Baby and Toddler Group - Tuesday 9th May

Please note there is a change of date this month. We will meet on Tuesday 9th May in order to coincide with the mission. Please join us for toys, craft activities, songs and stories from 10am to 11.30am in the St Sarik Room next to St Andrew's Church. All pre-school aged children and their parents/carers are welcome.

Sarah Turner

Sonning Twinning Association

We are delighted that James Burke of Reading Blue Coat School and Amy Jones of Sonning Church of England Primary School have each won a bursary (donated by a generous Sonning Twinning Association member and by the Association) which will enable them to visit France this Summer to stay with a host family in Ligugé our twinned village near Poitiers. We know they will be made to feel very welcome there and hope they enjoy their taste of true French life. Our warmest congratulations to them both.

Welcome to Amelie Poudou who will be staying in Sonning through May and June. We are very grateful to Robert Drew for organising a work experience project for Amelie and to the Drew's and the Chapman's for having her to stay with them. We hope Amelie will enjoy her taste of Sonning life.

We are looking for local families who can offer accommodation from Friday 26 to Monday 29 May to our friends from Ligugé who will be rowing with us at the Sonning Regatta. Being a host is not onerous and does not require you to speak French. If you can help, please contact Lynn Woodhouse (0118 969 2206). Many thanks.

A date for your diary will be Saturday 8 July at the Pearson Hall when three Grands Maitres of Haut Poitou wines will be coming over from France to give us a very special tasting of some excellent wines from the region and specialities such as the Poitou charcuterie, Fromages de Chevres, Tourteau Fromager and Broye du Poitou. Tickets will be strictly limited and on a first come, first served basis so apply for yours now (£12.50 or £10 for Twinning Association members) from Lynn Woodhouse (969 2206), Mary Chapman (969 7398) or me on (969 7753).

David Bates

Sonning CE Primary School

The routines of the new Summer Term have been quickly re-established after the Easter break but it seemed very strange to be returning to school the day after Easter Monday! We are now officially a one form entry school and the oldest children in the school are now enjoying a little more space in their classrooms. The school is at its largest ever with 179 pupils and although this increase has meant a number of changes over the past years it has been important to keep our school's Christian ethos and family feel at the heart of all we do.

At the end of term we said goodbye to Joanna Cross who had worked with Holly class (Year 4/5) for two terms covering Mrs Kelsall's maternity leave. We are delighted that she has moved to teach in another church school within the area, Shinfield St Mary's Junior School, where her musical gifts will be very much welcomed and further developed.

The term ahead promises to be another extremely busy one with an important focus on assessment for all children but especially for our Year 2 and 6 pupils who are required to be assessed against the National Curriculum levels in Maths, English and Science. We have a Fitness Week planned for July and Year 6 will be performing a version of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' before they leave us at the end of term to move onto their secondary school.

One of the most significant developments in recent years has been the increasing role and impact of ICT, especially computers, in the life of schools. The use of interactive whiteboards in promoting high quality teaching and learning is very evident and we hope to have one in each classroom very shortly. May I thank those of you who have continued to contribute to our various voucher collection schemes such as Tesco's 'Computers for Schools' or Sainsbury's 'Active Kids'. We have been able to purchase a number of items with these and your support is much appreciated.

We are also very much looking forward to being involved in the Parish Mission this month and to welcoming the Franciscans into our school at various times during their stay in the area.

Lesley Green

Jazz and Fish 'n Chips- March

The Fish'n Chips Jazz Night with the Denise Lawrence Band was a huge success and I would like to thank all those who helped to make it so. After all expenses were paid we were able to donate £325.00 to the RNLI.

Jane Gascoine

Free Wood Chippings

With the Hose pipe ban and the threat of a dry summer the wood chippings make excellent water retaining, garden mulch. You need to take your own container/bags and a spade to fill them up. It is situated in the Dinton Pastures overflow/fishing car park on the left as you turn into the main entrance on the Hurst - Winnersh Road and you can help yourself to as much as you want.

Pam Glasspool.

Sonning Scarecrows, Open Gardens & Fun Floral Display

The building ideas evening in the Pearson Hall last month was a huge success. Once again the Village is fired up ready for the Scarecrow Bank Holiday event on the 28th and 29th May, with plenty of Scarecrow characters already booked on the trail. **There is still time and room for you to get your character onto the list.** The deadline for completing the artwork and getting the Map and list to the Printers is the 14th May so please, don't miss out - ring NOW to get your character registered.

We are very grateful to those kind folk who are opening their Gardens and to the owners of Bishops Close and The Mill at Sonning for parking facilities.

Join in the fun of this lovely event - we are still looking for help to man the car parks and gardens, as well as for donations of cakes and plants to sell.

Call Now:

Malcolm Stansfield - 9341762

Barbara Carr - 9345886 (scarecrows)

Pam Glasspool- 9692800 (car park and gardens)

Pam Glasspool

Sonning Village
SCARECROW
TRAIL

28th - 29th MAY

11.00 am - 5.00 pm

GARDENS OPEN

Church Fun Floral Display
ALL DAY REFRESHMENTS

Plant Sale

FREE PARKING!

Inclusive Trail Map and Gardens ticket £3.00

In Aid Of The Village Playground Appeal

Parish Council - Annual Parish Meeting - 10 MAY

The 2006 Annual Parish Meeting will be held in the Pearson Hall, Pearson Road on Wednesday 10 May. We are grateful to Cllr Frank Browne, Leader of Wokingham District Council for offering to attend and update us all on the additional Thames crossing status.

The format for the evening will be:

7.00 Reception with welcome drink and nibbles

7.30 Reports by Councillors to Parishioners

8.00 Address by Frank Browne on Thames crossing 'progress'

Questions to Frank Browne by Parishioners

9.00 Questions to the Council on other matters

All parishioners are encouraged to attend what promises to be an interesting evening.

Clerk to the Council



Sonning LTC Diamond Jubilee



TENNIS OPEN DAY

Saturday May 20th 11am – 3pm

During a weekend of Diamond Jubilee Celebrations, Sonning Lawn Tennis Club is holding an Open Day on Saturday May 20th.

- Everyone welcome to come along and join the fun
 - All ages (Adults and Juniors)
 - All standards
- Rackets available to suit all ages
- Junior Fun Factory
- Speed Gun (test the speed of your serve)
- Raffle
- Tombola

(All proceeds will be donated to the Macular Disease Society)



Sonning

For those wishing to join our friendly club, membership entitles you to full use of the courts at any time (subject to availability) and to join in all club

activities. There are regular Club Sessions, where all members are encouraged to mix in, held on Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesdays throughout the year, and on Tuesday evenings during the Summer months.

Coaching is available for those wishing to improve their game.

Looking for a more competitive game? There are Singles and Double Championships for members, and we have teams entered into the Berkshire Leagues (Mens, Ladies and Mixed Doubles). Good players will soon find themselves in demand for League matches!

The club also organises a number of social events during the year.

New members are very welcome - if you are interested but can't attend the Open Day, just come along to one of our Sunday morning club sessions, where you will be able to meet other members and join in a game.

Membership for the 2006-2007 season is available now - please contact Alison Campbell on 969 2646 for further details.

Sonning & Sonning Eye Society

Society Welcomes New Residents

If you are new to Sonning or Sonning Eye, or if you know of any new residents in this area, the Sonning & Sonning Eye Society would like to hear from you. The Society has produced a 'Welcome Pack' pack for new residents containing information about its activities. We hope that these packs will encourage new residents to join us and help them to appreciate the richness and diversity of our area. If you would like to receive one of these information packs please contact Diana Coulter on 969 2132 or Carole Barnett on 969 6693.

Summer Luncheon

On Sunday 18th June between 12.00 and 4.00 pm we will be holding a Summer Luncheon in the garden of The Eyot House in Sonning Eye. This beautiful Listed Grade II* building was designed in 1904 by Halsey Ricardo (1854-1928) for Reginald Blunt and his family as a country home. The architect and owner originally met when both men worked at the William De Morgan tile factory at Sands End in Fulham. The factory, previously based in Chelsea, made richly hued glazed tiles and decorative murals firstly for William Morris and later for P & O liners. A magnificent example of one of these murals is still to be seen on the patio wall. A full description and history of the house will be the main feature of the next issue of

bridge, our quarterly newsletter. The luncheon is for S&SES members only and tickets can be obtained from Penny Feathers at a cost of £10.00 each.

A Walk on the Wild Side

There are still a few places left for 'A Walk on the Wild Side' that Alastair Driver is leading on Saturday 13th May. This walk will take you from Sonning Churchyard, along the Thames, to the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve giving you the opportunity to get up close and personal with the huge variety of wildlife that inhabits that area. This very interesting and enjoyable walk will start at in the Churchyard near the entrance from the High Street. The group will meet at 2.15p.m. for a 2.30p.m. start. Refreshments will be available in The Bull after the walk. Tickets cost £1.50 for members and £3.00 for non-members and are available from Diana Coulter on 969 2132.

Mark Green

Sonning Flower Club

The *Gardeners Question Time* was a great success (as always) with a good supper and a quiz compiled by David Penny.

Future social events:

- Scarecrow Weekend and church flower display 28th & 29th May. (The church will be decorated on 26th May)
- West Forest Flower Club & trip to Hatfield House on 10th June. Tickets £10.00 each - phone 962 9617.
- A long way in advance, but just to show you how interesting the Flower Club can be, *The Mill at Sonning* have kindly offered their venue for a flower demonstration on stage on 26th Feb 2007. More about this later.

A Passion for Flowers was the theme of the March meeting and Jeanette Bell treated us to six beautiful and amazing arrangements. Driftwood, Palm leaves, Kangaroo Paw (a new one on me) Protea, incredible plum coloured Orchids and Hellebores were just a few of the plant materials used. The final arrangement was wonderful; white Roses and Lilies as pure as the driven snow. The competition had a good show of entries for *The Mad Hatter* and was won jointly by Enid Roberts and Joan Selvage.

The theme of the April meeting was *All Change* and the demonstrator was Pat King. An Easter feel with bright Sunflowers followed by a continental one with pink Orchids was a good start. All white Chrysanthemums, Alstroemeria and green fern were used for a hand tied bunch, then a baby

bunch of the same suitable for one big and one small bridesmaid. A traditional all coloured triangle always goes down well and she followed this with an upright of white Lilies, which scented the whole hall. A final horizontal (boat shaped) design was quite remarkable. The competition, *A Decorated Egg*, was won by Catherine Penny.

Well, after all that (we really do get our moneys worth) we even had hot cross buns and tea, turning the whole event into a happy social gathering. The next meeting will be on 11th May when Mrs Alex Graham will demonstrate *Country Gardens Mark 2* (Hmm, I wonder what mark 1 was like?) and the competition for those wishing to enter is *A basket of Flowers*.

Jane Gascoine

A Bridge too Far.....?

A biker was riding along a California beach when suddenly the sky clouded above his head and, in a booming voice, the Lord said:

"Because you have TRIED to be faithful to me in all ways, I will grant you one wish".

The biker pulled over and said:

"Build a bridge to Hawaii so I can ride over anytime I want."

The Lord said:

"Your request is materialistic. Think of the enormous challenges for that kind of undertaking. The supports required to reach the bottom of the Pacific! The concrete and steel it would take! It will nearly exhaust several natural resources. I can do it, but it is hard for me to justify your desire for worldly things. Take a little more time and think of something that would honour and glorify me."

The biker thought about it for a long time. Finally he said:

"Lord, I wish that I could understand my wife. I want to know how she feels inside, what she's thinking when she gives me the silent treatment, why she cries, what she means when she says nothing's wrong, and how I can make a woman truly happy. In short I want to understand women."

The Lord replied:

"You want two lanes or four on that bridge?"