

Sonning Parish Magazine



Serving the Communities
of Sonning and Charvil



25p

April 2009

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 guesthouse 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 bypassing 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

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Forthcoming Events

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9 May	Sonning Club Race Night	22
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14 May	S&SES, History of Sonning Fire Brigade	27
16 May	Christian Aid Concert, St Patrick's	19
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31 May	S&SES Heritage Trail	28
6 June	Sonning LTC Barn Dance	R
17 Oct	Fish Chips n' Jazz evening	23
Notes:	Deadline, May Magazine: 4.00 pm Fri, 24th April R = Reminder from previous issues. D = Diary entry.	

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EASTER SERVICES

Palm Sunday, 5 April.

- 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion - St Andrew's
- 9.30 a.m. Family Service - St Patrick's
- 10.30a.m. All Age Parish Eucharist - St Andrew's
- 6.30 p.m. Evensong - St Andrew's

Maundy Thursday, 9 April

- 8.00 p.m. Holy Communion Service (and stripping of the altar) St Andrew's

Good Friday, 10 April

- 2.00 p.m. - 3.00 p.m. A Service of Readings and Prayers - St Andrew's
- 2.00 p.m. Children's activities in the St Sarik Room.

Easter Saturday, 11 April

- 4.00 p.m. A walk from The Vicarage, Sonning to St Patrick's Church with a BBQ on arrival. Tickets, price £4.00 are available at both Churches.
- 7.00 p.m. Easter Vigil in St Patrick's

Easter Day, 12 April

- 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion - St Andrew's
- 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion Service - St Patrick's
- 10.30 a.m. Parish Eucharist - St Andrew's
- 6.30 p.m. Evensong - St Andrew's

Easter Monday, 13 April

- 2.00 p.m. Easter tea party and Easter egg hunt for children in the Parish, to be held at the Vicarage. RSVP to revjaft@yahoo.co.uk

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 Church Service in St. Andrew's Church you are asked to contact Sonia Boyles, the Parish Administrator for Baptisms. Sonia can also be contacted by email at: standrews.sonning@btinternet.com. For Weddings and funerals, contact the vicar on 0118 969 3298.

The Vicars Letter

Dear friends,

In my last parish in Broadstairs, we decided to spend the five Sundays of Lent listening to prominent Christians telling us why they were Christians. The Lord High Commissioner to India started us off, followed by a retired Bishop of Durham, a senior partner of a London law firm and the series ended with a barn storming sermon from Ann Widdecombe. At a time when our faith is increasingly marginalized, even ridiculed, it was encouraging to hear intelligent and well informed people speak honestly about their belief in the death and resurrection of Christ. It was good to strip away the churchy platitudes that we clergy can peddle at times, and simply hear what other Christians believe, and how Christ had changed their lives. We heard some remarkable stories of faith, and all alluded to a personal relationship with Christ. I was delighted with how these personal testimonies were received, and I know that many of the congregation were encouraged and inspired. It all seemed like a good idea at the time; that is until I sat down to write my sermon for Easter Day, the first time I would have been in the pulpit for 6 weeks! How on earth do you follow the Rt. Hon. Ann Widdecombe M.P., let alone all the others?

However, after a while it struck me that all I had asked these eminent visitors to do was to stand up and fulfil an obligation placed on us all. Many will not be able to stand up in front of two hundred people and talk about Christ, but we are supposed to do it with our colleagues, our families and our friends. But it is often so hard to do. We can be afraid of causing offence, or we are persuaded by the corrosive, yet superficially plausible argument that religion is a private affair. If we fear ridicule or being marginalized, we need to remember that there are Christians in a number of countries who are in prison, simply because of their faith. Indeed, I recently discovered that across the world, something approaching 500 people per day are killed for being Christians. The church has always been persecuted, from the days of the disciples, but it is remarkable to learn that it is in these areas that the church is at its most vibrant. It would seem that

when Christian communities are persecuted, they prosper. Western Christianity has suffered a long term decline, and I wonder if that has anything to do with the fact that not enough of us are comfortable with speaking to others about what Christ means to us, and that we have sleepwalked into a post Christian society.

Easter is almost upon us, and we shall soon be singing about Christ's death and resurrection. May I urge you all to think for a moment as you sing those hymns, about whether you really believe it all? Do you really think that God cares about us so much that His son was sent to show us how to live better lives, and that His son was crucified to pay the price for our sin? And do you believe that death wasn't the final outcome, and that the resurrection of Christ has given us all the chance to live forever with Him? If you don't believe that, then by all means carry on coming to church, and enjoy being part of a caring community. But if you do believe the words you will be singing, then just stop and think about it! The Easter story is so amazing and earth shattering that the disciples wanted to tell everyone about it. They gave up their livelihoods and even their lives to pass on the extraordinary news. What about us? Although we have moderately healthy Sunday attendances, the undeniable story nationally is one of decline. Surely we all have an obligation to tell others about the good news, not just for their sakes, but for the sake of the church? The Easter message is dynamite, yet our fuses are so often damp, and the impact fizzles out.

Like my esteemed visitors to the pulpit in Broadstairs, Easter is also a hard act to follow, in that, if we really believe, then our lives will change, and we will want to tell others. "Tell of that glorious Easter morn, empty the tomb for he was free. He broke the power of death and hell that we might share his victory". Don't just sing it, but get out there and do it!

Wishing you all a blessed Holy Week and a very Happy Easter.

Jamie

Notices

Palm Sunday-April 5th: Our service will begin in the churchyard where palm crosses will be blessed and a hymn sung. We shall then process to the church, and children will go for special activities in the St Sarik room. The service in church will continue with the passion gospel, followed by communion.

Advance Notice, D Day: St Andrew's will be hosting a special commemorative service at 6:30pm on June 7th for the 65th anniversary of D Day; the beginning of the liberation of Europe in 1944. Please put a note in your diaries.

Telephone numbers: Michael and I would greatly value having the phone numbers of everyone who is on the electoral roll. At the moment it is not at all easy to get in touch with you! We are compiling a list, and ask that you fill in the forms that are left at the back of church. They will only be available to us and the wardens.

APCM: The annual general meeting of the parish, where reports are given, officers elected and other important matters dealt with, is on Thursday 30th April at 8:00pm in St Patrick's. Please make every effort to attend.

Junior Choir: The initial selection for our new, first Sunday of the month junior choir is complete, and we shall welcome them to our all age parish Eucharist on Mothering Sunday. They will rehearse on the Friday night between 7:00pm-7:40pm. New members will be welcomed.

Parish Drinks: *Caroline and I have started to host drinks parties for members of the church (names taken from the church electoral roll, rather than the parish council's). It has come to light that there are regular worshippers who did not renew their membership at the church electoral roll revision last year. Therefore I have no means of inviting them. If you think that you might not have renewed last year, please be in contact with our administrator, Sonia Boyles to check. We shall then be able to invite you for a drink! Many thanks.*

Jamie

Charvil Comment

How will you be celebrating Easter this year? Where will you be? Will you be observing and reflecting on the meaning and significance of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection for you, or will you be submerged in Easter eggs and Easter bunnies? I know we will be overtaken by both the former and the latter.

In the Lent course the next to last session has been focussed on the interpretation of the unique word 'agape'- the Greek word for Christian love as distinct from the other three kinds of love viz friendship, romantic and sexual. C.S.Lewis wrote a memorable book entitled "The Four Loves" published in paperback. Jesus' death on that old rugged cross all those years ago as both Son of Man and Son of God was the highest possible demonstration of God's agape love for all mankind that there has ever been or ever could be.

It was His choice to identify Himself totally with our suffering, past, present and future; to put an end to death by dying for us all. It is this expression of 'agape' love which has put an end to the finality of death through Jesus' emergence from that tomb. Easter day is the most optimistic and glorious

celebration of that fact. To make Easter day a reality for more people is possible by the Christian family of God showing the love of God to those who need it most of all, the lost, the least and the last. Where are the gaps in our society today that we as Christians could fill that are not met by the state or the local authority?

A very joy filled Easter to all who read this and take it to heart and into action.

Love and prayers

Michael and family

Christian Aid Concert

Well folks it's coming up again, that theatrical delight to end all theatrical delights. The Christian Aid concert is all set for **Sat 16th May, 7.00 pm at St Patrick's**. Tickets are now on sale from Bob Hine (0118 969 8653) and Chris Easton (0118 934 0795) priced at £5 a time. So step up, there'll be another cornucopia of Michael's jokes (worth the price of admission alone) plus the cast from Hades including the humour of Peters, Pierce & Hammond, the Charvil Nightingale, a bluegrass band, Lady Jane and her jazz and poems, the organ grinder, that Should be Band lot and by popular demand - a new vicar. There's also a raffle and light refreshments at half time.

So clear the diaries buy a ticket and come along to have fun and swell the Christian Aid week coffers, you know it makes sense.

Joanna (the St Patrick's Pianner)

Sonning Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting

All parishioners are encouraged to attend the Annual Parish Meeting of the Council on Wednesday, 13th May in the Pearson Hall; the format will be as:

- 7.00pm: Reception - a welcome drink will be provided
- 7.30pm: Councillors Reports - a review of the past year
- 8.00pm: Parishioner's Questions to Councillors
- 8.30pm: Guest Speaker
- 9.00pm: Questions to Guest Speaker
- 10.00pm: Close

I am delighted to announce that Pat Baxter, Transport Strategy Manager, Reading Borough Council has accepted our invitation to attend and update parishioners on Reading's current transport plans. These plans follow the Independent Transport Commission report into the now abandoned one

way Inner Distribution Road proposal. The plans have significant implications for adjoining authorities and include a potential additional Thames crossing.

Village Spring Clean 25/26 April

The Parish Council has chosen this weekend for the annual spring clean in order to co-ordinate with the Borough wide litter campaign on 26 April. **Your help is needed** to make our lovely village ready for the summer and all our visitors.

The control point will be the Sports Pavilion, King George's Field, where equipment and refreshments will be available. The start time on both days will be 10.00am and aiming to finish at 2.00pm; areas will be allocated on the day. Individuals and groups are welcome and children must be accompanied by an adult. Please ensure adequate protective clothing such as gardening gloves.

Last year the response was only moderate, we need **plenty of volunteers please**. It is our village, let's be proud of it! For further information, please contact either me on 07774 494610 or Lesley Bates on 969 7753. Look forward to seeing you on the day(s).

Lesley Bates

The Caterpillar Club (Mother & Toddler Group)

Since the start of the year, we have been really pleased to welcome lots of new faces. The term finished off with an early visit from Easter Bunny, a bouncy castle and some Easter craft activities - plenty to get the children excited about!

If you're new to the area or haven't heard about us, the Caterpillar Club is an informal and relaxed Mother & Toddler Group that meets every Wednesday morning during term-time in Charvil Village Hall. The session starts around 9.45am and runs until 11.30am. We have lots of toys for the children to play with, ride-ons for them to scoot around on and there is always a craft activity and playdough to keep your little ones occupied. We also have a dedicated baby area for our youngest members. The group is open to any carers with little ones, whether you're a grandparent, nanny, aunty etc and even if you're not Charvil based, you are very welcome to come and give us a go! It'll give your little one the chance to burn off some of that energy that they have some much of at this age!

If you'd like to find out more about this group, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0118 934 4253 or just come along any term-time Wednesday morning - we'll be glad to welcome you.

Bridget Mundy

Charvil Pre-School

Plenty has been going on at the pre-school since the start of the New Year. Most recently on Red Nose day, the children were asked to wear something funny or red whilst during Book Week, we had parents coming in to read stories to the children. The term finished up with our Spring celebration with the children parading through the hall wearing their Spring crowns and singing seasonal songs - it was a great sight to see.

We have been pleased to welcome some new faces this term and look forward to welcoming even more at the start of the summer term. If you're unfamiliar with the pre-school, let me tell you a bit about it. The pre-school provides a safe, friendly and stimulating environment for children approaching 3 up to school age. The focus of the pre-school, which is OFSTED registered, is to give children the opportunity to learn through play by offering a variety of activities, ranging from painting and sticking to structured group work. The staff, all of whom have experience of working with children and are CRB checked, provide a fantastic learning environment for the children, encouraging them to develop their social skills, whilst having lots of fun. The pre-school is located in St Patrick's Church Hall on Park View Drive North in Charvil.

If you'd like to find out more about the pre-school, please do not hesitate to contact Emma James on 0118 969 5538. Our website also gives you some information (www.charvilpreschool.co.uk) should you wish to visit that in the meantime.

Bridget Mundy

Sonning Football Club

Back on Home Soil at King George's Field.

We really enjoy playing back at Sonning after a lapse of many years and are currently on a very good run of results, going unbeaten in the last 6 games and winning 5 on the trot. This has culminated in being awarded

The Reading League Team of the Month for February,

which is a great accolade to win. Look out for photos taken before the match on the 21st March which will appear in the Reading Post/Chronicle and our own website.

We welcome supporters new and old. Contact **Andy Rolfe**, 1st Team Manager, email: Sonningfc@googlemail.com

Sonning Art Group

A few weeks ago the Group welcomed international artist Dee Cowell to present a demonstration session entitled "Introduction to Acrylics". Several members had no previous experience of using this medium and enjoyed the opportunity to get deeply involved under Dee's expert guidance. As it happened, some of the techniques demonstrated also proved useful to our more experienced members making a welcome addition to their existing stock of painting skills.

Dee brought a selection of her delightful African and Far East pictures along many depicting animals in the wild, including herds of elephants and rather hungry looking lions. Her free style and bold use of warm colours made for very atmospheric pictures and were particularly effective in her Far East pictures. It will be interesting to see to what extent members adopt these approaches for our coming exhibitions.

For our third year in staging an Art Award competition at Sonning C of E Primary School, entries rose from 78 last year to a staggering 178 this year! This made judging a tough (but enjoyable) task for members as every painting had its own merit. The results are:-

Best overall picture: Samuel Watts age 10

Runners up: Duncan Barker-Thorne age 11, Saskia Mercer-Gray age 4

Highly commended: Aulin Barton-Brown age 7, Isabel Floreale age 7, Josh Cowling age 8, Rhiann Havord age 5.

The Awards will be presented at a School Assembly next month. The Group wish to thank all members of the school staff for their work in encouraging pupils and ensuring the project was a success.

George Webster

The Sonning Club

Just a quick update on the progress of the Club and it's now much more promising future. After our EGM that was held in June of last year we had several very generous donations which have secured the foreseeable future for our much loved club. We were able to pay outstanding bills and members committed to using the Club on a more regular basis. Since then, we are definitely holding our own. We appear to be doing just as well if not better than some of our competitive Club's and because of our reasonable drinks prices are encouraging normal pub drinkers into our doors.

We have had an increase in membership and our events have brought in not

only members but many of their guests. Whilst we may be in an unsafe and unsure Economic Climate we feel hopeful that we will survive it as we have for over the last 100 years.

I would therefore like to thank every member and their guests for all the support they have given us over the last year. Without their kind generosity we may well have become another institution that had fallen to the 'Credit Crunch'. We hope to be holding Fund raising events over this coming year that will allow us to make some much needed external and internal improvements to the Club. We will keep you all updated on our progress.

Some dates for your diary;

Sun, 12th April: Easter Egg Hunt 12.00 noon - 3.00pm

Sun, 19th April: St Georges Day Celebrations 12.00 noon - 3.00pm

Sat, 9th May: Race Night 8.00pm

Please remember that you need to be a member to enjoy these events so if anyone would like information about joining the Club please contact us on 0118 969 3939 and speak to our Steward, Suzy.

Tracy Barrett

Fish, Chips n' Jazz Supper

Following the very successful event on 13th March, we were able to send a cheque for £267 to the RNLI.

Due to popular demand, we are arranging for another Fish, Chips n' Jazz Supper on Saturday 17th October 2009, in the Pearson hall. Jazz fans please note.

Jane Gascoine

Sonning Floral Arrangement Society


Sixty people attended the March meeting. We seem to get more new members every month, which shows how popular we are. We will soon need a bigger venue (I jest of course) - the Pearson Hall is perfect for our needs, having a high stage, so everyone can see, a big well equipped kitchen, comfortable chairs and is a well maintained and managed building.

Our Chairman began the meeting with a few announcements. For those attending Westminster Abbey on 7th May, the coach will pick up passengers at the top of Pound Lane at 9.00am and at 2 Headley Road (Linpac) Woodley at 9.10am.

“Chairman of the Berks & Bucks Speakers and Demonstrators Committee”: With a title like that you would expect Pat Dibben to be exceptionally good, and she was! Her theme was *Colour Ways* and to set the scene she had decorated all the front of the stage with daffodils. Exotic flowers such as yellow anthuriums, ginger lilies, foxtail lilies, white, orange and yellow lilies, green orchids, and large yellow and green chrysanthemums were worked into the most wonderful display of arrangements, which left us all gasping. As always, we then had a refreshing cup of tea and biscuits, with all the flowers then being raffled off to a few lucky winners.

Next month, there will be a club workshop with a chance to practice what we learn at these meetings. Entitled *Golden Fanfare*, Ann Turner and Joan Wise will be demonstrating for your edification and you will need to bring a basket, Oasis, scissors, flowers and foliage. Don't forget a black bin liner for your rubbish.


Jane Gascoine



The Curious Disappearance
of
Major Glenn Miller
U.S. Army

In Aid of the Poppy Appeal

Thursday 30th April 2009
At 7.30pm



The Royal British Legion (Sonning Branch)
and the Reading Blue Coat School Parents Arts Society

Invite you to attend a talk given by Mr Tony Eaton, unravelling the mystery of the famous bandleader's disappearance, supposedly whilst en route to Paris in 1944

**Glenn Millers last appearance in the U.K.
was at Wycombe Abbey School, High Wycombe
The war time Headquarters of the U.S. 8th Army Air Force
Venue: The Buttery. Reading Blue Coat School
Holme Park. Sonning. RG4 6SU**

To purchase/book tickets contact: Malcolm Geater. 24 Lyefield Court. Emmer Green. Reading. RG4 8AP.
Tickets are available **from 20th March 2009**: £5.00 each. Students £3.00
Tel: 0118 947 1677

email: geater@talktalk.net

Sonning LTC

TENNIS OPEN DAY

Sunday April 26th 11am – 3pm

- **Courts newly resurfaced for 2009!**
- **Everyone welcome**
 - All ages (Adults and Juniors)
 - All standards
- **Wear trainers & join in a game**
- **Rackets available to suit all ages**
- **Junior Fun Factory & Mini-Tennis**
- **Coaching mix-in 12:00 – 2pm**



Sonning LTC will be holding their annual Tennis Open Day on Sunday 26th April this year. Come along, join in a game or two, and find out what the club has to offer.

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 both adults and juniors.

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

New members are always welcome – if you are interested in joining, 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 2009-10 season is available now - please contact Alison Campbell on 969 1101 for further details.

The club also regularly organises social events for members and guests.

On June 6th, we will be holding a Barn Dance in Pearson Hall. All Sonning residents are most welcome (subject to availability). For further details, please contact Steve Billington on 969 4609.



Sonning CE School

The remaining part of the Spring Term seems to have flown by and all memories of the snow and school closures are now well behind us. As always there has been a multitude of activities taking place over recent weeks. Many of these fall into the area of curriculum enrichment - events and activities that provide opportunities for our children to develop and extend skills they have already learnt or to apply them to very different contexts. During our multi-cultural fortnight there were visits from Indian Dancers, an African storyteller and a fantastic samba workshop for each class which culminated in a very exciting and noisy whole school session in the hall with much dancing and music making by both children and staff!

Year 6 have recently returned from a very successful visit to the Isle of Wight. The weather was very kind to us and everyone enjoyed a variety of challenges. The 'Leap of Faith' which involved scaling a pole only to leap off onto a trapeze was the highlight for many; for others it was getting plastered head to toe in mud doing the Nightline activity. Year 5 have visited the Roald Dahl museum to support their Literacy work, Year 2 re-enacted the Great Fire of London by burning the houses they had made and Year 6 started their study of Shakespeare with a visit to the Hexagon to see Romeo and Juliet. Our Year 3 and 4 children have just completed their fantastic performances of 'Hoodwinked' - a musical about Robin Hood and a large group of junior children have had a very successful cross country season. The Sonning Art Club were overwhelmed by the number of school entries for their art competition and some of our children took part in the speaking aspect of the Woodley Festival. We have also held an 'E Safety' session for our parents raising awareness of appropriate and safe use of the internet.

Our term ends on April 3rd when we will come to church for our Easter service. In our Collective Worship this half term we have been looking at the last week of Jesus' life through the memories of five witness birds. As part of the service we shall bring crosses and recall that first Easter through words and song. A very big thank you to the PCC who have so generously funded a set of bibles for younger children.

Finally at the end of term we shall also be saying goodbye to Mrs Kathryn Zand, our Early Years teaching assistant and we wish her and her family well as they re-locate to Catterick with her army husband.

Lesley Green

Riverside Tea Garden, Sonning Lock

Good news for all those of you who have been wandering down to the lock recently in the gorgeous spring sunshine hoping for a lovely cup of tea and piece of homemade cake, the tea garden re-opens on Monday 6 April, 11-5pm. We look forward to welcoming all our past valued customers and those of you who have yet to come and sample the delights of cream teas by the river. Remember - we are open 7 days a week 11-5pm, come rain or shine.

Keith and Jo Burnage

Is the Church Facing up to its Responsibilities?

I believe it is not.

We are regularly regaled with Biblical readings and stories which are put forward as being applicable to today, yet the one big issue which will affect future generations is never discussed. I refer to global warming.

The great difference between the times that the scriptures talk of and today is that in earlier times man was not capable of altering his environment. Today he is. We are stewards of this planet and our job is to preserve these fair lands so that we can hand them over to future generations as a going concern. Unless we take our stewardship seriously all that we shall leave will be barren desert and swollen seas. We shall get no second chance.

We should all ask ourselves a simple question: *When we hand over this global heritage to future generations will they love us or hate us for the way we have preserved their birthright?*

Rusty Atkins

Sonning & Sonning Eye Society

The History of the Sonning Volunteer Fire Brigade

I must begin this month by apologising for having to cancel my talk on the history of the Sonning Volunteer Fire Brigade due to a rather nasty chest infection. The good news is that we have been able to re-schedule and the talk will now take place in The Buttery at Reading Blue Coat School on Thursday 14th May starting at 7:45 for 8:00 pm. Tickets for Members cost £3.00, and for non-Members £4.50, and are available by contacting Diana Coulter on 0118 969 2132.

I will be taking a look back at the fascinating history of the Fire Brigade in Sonning from its inception in 1905 through until the closure of the fire station in 2007.

The Sonning Heritage Trail

Members, friends and families are invited to join us for the rescheduled Heritage Trail which will now be held on Sunday 31st May starting from Beech Lodge between 1:30 - 2p.m. Come and enjoy a happy afternoon walking in Sonning with an opportunity that will open your eyes followed by a delicious tea when you return to Beech Lodge. The cost is £4.00 for Members, £5.00 non-members and £2.00 for children. For more information and to reserve your place ring Penny Feathers on 0118 9343 193.

London Wetland Centre Visit

The London Wetland Centre visit will take place on Sunday 17th May. The 42 hectare London Wetland Centre is the best urban site in Europe to watch wildlife, an international award winning visitor attraction and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Located on the banks of the River Thames in Barnes, Southwest London the centre is home to rare and beautiful wildlife including Bitterns, Kingfishers and a colony of endangered Water voles. We ask you to make your own way to Barnes and to meet in the restaurant at 1.00pm. Tickets cost £7.00 for members or £8.00 for non members and are available by contacting Diana Coulter on 0118 969 2132.

Mark Green

Port Wine

When rectors drank Port Wine
When no man talked of grace
What jolly days were those!
Ah! Then a parson's face
Displayed a parson's nose, -
A parson's nose of red,
Which gloriously did shine,
Supremely strong of head,
When rectors drank Port Wine...

From Punch, 1870's

Local Organisations

St Andrew's: Sunday Club	Heather Hexter	946 1316
St Andrew's: Little Fishes	Mrs Sarah Turner	944 8154
St Andrew's: Tower Captain:	Mrs P. Elliston	969 5967
The Friends of St Andrew's	Sally Wilson	979 3328
St Patrick's: Sunday Club	Julie Easton	934 2590
1st Charvil Rainbows	Guider: Brenda Cowdery	934 5698
Charvil Art Club	Secretary: Mrs Joyce Wray	969 8098
Charvil Branch Conservatives	Mrs E. Hobbs	934 0528
Charvil Brownies	Tawny Owl: Claire Howells	934 5372
Charvil Caterpillar Club	Bridget Mundy	934 4253
Charvil Girls Choir	S Newman	934 0589
Charvil Guides	Ruth Hulley	969 9431
Charvil Parish Council	Clerk: Mr I. Cohen	901 7693
Charvil Pre-School Playgroup	Nadine Doble	934 0418
Charvil Senior Residents Club	Miss C. Edwards	969 2114
Charvil Voices	Eileen Fulbrook	969 1738
Charvil Women's Club	Mrs S. Newman	934 0589
Sonning & Charvil Baby-sitting Circle	Mrs Vanessa Jones <i>E-mail</i> vanessalouisejones@hotmail.com	934 1185
Sonning & District Chernobyl	Maria Gee	962 7721
Children's Lifeline Link Group	maria.gee@ntlworld.com	
Sonning Art Group	Chairman: Mr G.B. Webster	944 0699
Sonning Book Club	Mrs Anne Webster	944 0699
Sonning Branch, British Legion	Chairman: Colin Pierce	969 3779
Sonning C of E Primary School	Head Teacher: Mrs L. Green	969 3399
Sonning CE School PTA	Heather Hollingsworth	0779 934 5129
Sonning & Warren Conservatives	Sec: Alison Russell	972 1495
Sonning Cricket Club	Membership: Ali Driver	969 2698
Sonning Flower Club	Sec: Ms S. Robinson	969 0748
Sonning Girlguiding (age 5 -14)	Diane Reeves	969 2987
Sonning Glebe Art Club	Julian Toms	969 0100
Sonning Glebe WI (eve mtgs)	Mrs D. Mouldsley	961 8829
Sonning Lawn Tennis Club	Membership: Ali Campbell	969 1101
Sonning Liberal Democrats	Coling Lawley	961 8536
Sonning Neighbourhood Watch	Sec: Sue Bell	969 6924
Sonning Parish Council	Clerk, Mrs L. Bates	969 7753
Sonning RNLI	Chairman: David Bates	969 7753
1st Sonning Scouts Group	GS Leader: Wendy Cherry	926 2363
1st Sonning Scouts Group	ASG Leader: Mike Watts	962 8388

1 st Sonning Scouts Group	Scout Leader: Colin Giles	969 5849
1st Sonning Scouts Group	Cub Scouts: Alison King	962 1675
1st Sonning Scouts Group	Beavers: Judy Ricketts	969 3279
Sonning Table Tennis Club	Alan Tinson	969 0782
Sonning Twinning Association	David Bates	969 7753
Sonning Toddler Group	Emma James	969 5538
Sonning Village Players	Sec: Mr S. Atkins	969 1134
Sonning & Sonning Eye Society	Sec: Mrs P. Feathers	934 3193
Sonning Village Show	Sec: Mrs Heather Hine	969 8653
Sonning Club	Sec: Mrs Penney Mackenzie	07730 871959
Friends of Ali's Pond	Alastair Driver	969 2698
Monday Club	Leader: Ken Trimmings	969 1072
Pearson Hall	Caretaker & Bookings: Mrs Jenny Adams	99 7692
Pearson Hall Mgmt Committee	Sec: Mr Colin McEwen	934 0300
Badminton Club	Mrs P. Pardoe	934 5643
Longmead Bridge Club	Chairman: Tony Cowling	969 5181
Rotary Club of Loddon Vale	Sec: Norman Mouldsley	961 8829
Short Mat Bowling Club	Mrs S. Newman	934 0589

Useful web sites:

Ali's Pond	E-mail: ali@sonningdrivers.plus.com www.sonning.net/alispond.html
Sonning & Charvil services	www.sonningparish.org.uk/docs.htm
Sonning Parish Council	www.sonning-pc.gov.uk
Sonning Working Men's Club	www.btinternet.com/~sonning_club/news.html
Sonning-on-Thames	archive.museophile.sbu.ac.uk/sonning www.sonning.net
Sonning & Sonning Eye Society	www.sonning.org.uk
Sonning Art Group	www.sonningartgroup.org.uk
Sonning School	www.sonning.wokingham.sch.uk