

# ***Parish Magazine of St Giles' & St Margaret's, Oxford***



***August 2006***

***Free***

## **The United Benefice of *St Giles and SS Philip & James with St Margaret***

<http://www.st-giles-church.org>

<http://www.parishes.oxford.anglican.org/oxford-stmargaret/>

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The parish magazine aims to provide an opportunity for us to exchange ideas and to share our experience of the Christian life. Publication date is intended to be the last Sunday of the preceding month, so copy should be sent before the previous Wednesday. Please send the editor articles, drawings, book reviews, and parish news. The editor is especially grateful for material which has no particular sell-by date and for texts sent by email attachment.

### ***Deadline for submissions for next issue:***

***Wednesday, 30 August, 5 pm (for distribution Sunday, 3 September).***

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## **Dear Friends,**

**August 2006**

For the last couple of years there has been the tradition that the August edition of the magazine would have a humorous content and hence I start off this article with an old favourite. An Englishman, an Irishman and a Scotsman are standing in front of a firing squad. They are told that if they shout the name of a natural disaster, they will be released. The Scotsman, being brave and probably coming from Glasgow, shouts out "FLOOD" and earns his release. The Englishman, inspired by what he has just witnessed and by his knocking knees, croaks out "Ea-rth-qu-ake" and earns his release. The Irishman thinks this is easy and without thinking further shouts out "FIRE!"

Now the inspiration behind offering this joke lies partly in the sentiment that was around when George Bush was first elected to the White House when there was another joke doing the rounds. It went something like... "Now that George Bush has been elected President, every American can get up in the morning, look in the mirror and say with conviction 'I am brighter than the President!'". But the main reason for offering this old chestnut of a joke was that it came to mind after attending a recent day conference on Climate Change organised by Christian Aid.

The purpose of the day was to look at the possible theological approach that would be most helpful when considering the problem of Climate Change. There must have been nearly thirty people gathered to discuss this issue and it was slightly surprising to me that everyone there took the attitude that Climate Change was a serious problem, indeed a VERY serious problem...to quote Time magazine. Jane Williams addressed those present and offered three different theological perspectives on how we might approach Climate Change. First, you could take the attitude that the environment is in God's hands and hence everything will be alright. Somehow God will wave his hand and a solution to the problems will emerge. This is a theological perspective which could be justified by an interpretation of some of the stories in Genesis, in particular the story of Noah's ark and the rainbow. The second approach places man more fully in the picture and accepts that we have a role to

play. This view has its roots in the Adam and Eve story where we are given a stewardship of creation. Hence, in this theological perspective, once we have accepted that Climate Change is a problem we have a moral duty and obligation to do all we can to solve it. The third view is derived more from a theology of eschatology and the resurrection. It accepts that we have a problem ahead and it is likely to have very wide reaching consequences, but a remnant will remain and thus human life will continue but in a severely chastened form.

There was much discussion about these three approaches and a general acceptance in the room that theologies two and three were probably most appropriate and we should strive to correct the problems of Climate Change before it was all too late. But there were two concerns which continually dogged the discussions. Firstly, was it already too late for us as a world community to change our ways to avoid the runaway problems of Climate Change? Secondly, was it feasible for us to expect that people would change their ways of life and expectations by the force of argument and reason alone?

If you listen to the opinions coming from our politicians, you will probably have a view that it is certainly not too late in the day to address the issues giving rise to Climate Change. All we have to do is get all the nations to sign up to the Kyoto protocol and make sure that we all hit the targets of reducing CO2 emissions by 15% in the next ten years and maybe getting a 60% reduction in 50 years. Technology is held out to be the way forward...everything is possible. So don't panic, it is all in hand. Unfortunately, there is a nagging doubt at the back of my mind which has been caused by a conversation with one of the experts in this field, Revd. Prof. Ian James. When I asked him how much of a reduction in CO2 emissions might be possible by enhanced technology, he replied 15% to 30% (absolute maximum). But set this against the back-ground that our CO2 emissions are still increasing because of our demand for economic growth! So the second question put to this expert was... "If we stopped emitting CO2 today, how long would it take for the concentration in the atmosphere to re-stabilise to pre-industrial levels?" The answer was more than a 100years! With the current CO2 levels in the atmosphere we have serious problems ahead with Climate

Change. Currently, it is reckoned that our climate is as it was in Roman times. However, if we don't cut our CO2 emissions drastically in the very near future, the situation will run away from us as the earth continues to warm up.

So we have a very urgent problem, there are many scientists that know that radical change in our lifestyle is imperative and the people in that conference room could see this. Which brings us to the second question – will people listen to the voice of reason and willingly adopt radical change? Call me a pessimist if you like, but I think history tells us that nobody willingly adopts radical change in their life-style. By far the most common tendency is to cling on to the known until disaster has struck and makes this position totally impossible. However much we think changes should take place, the necessary changes won't happen until they are seen to be absolutely necessary.

So what can we do? I believe that as Christians we should prepare ourselves in two different ways. First, we need to develop a vision of life for when cheap energy is a thing of the past. We need to assess what are the real priorities of life that give it a sense of meaning and value. Once we have recognised these key factors, then we can start to see how life can be modelled in the new age which is going to dawn in the next five to twenty years. Secondly, we need to prepare ourselves for the chaos of the transition period. Nicholas Coulton, the Sub-Dean, expressed the change in attitude that is required very neatly. He pointed out that as Christians we probably need to change the Christian Aid slogan from "We believe in life before death" to "We are working for a life beyond death!" We need to imagine what life will be like once our current society is a thing of the past.

Since humans seem to have a habit of resisting changes, it seems highly likely that the transition period will not be well managed or handled. It is not a part of history that I look forward to with any sense of joy. But the world has been through such times before, during the two world wars and in the Bible perhaps the best example seems to be the sack of Jerusalem prior to the exile. During such times, the foundations of our world will be shaken, life will be very tough and those that get through

are those that demand little for themselves, have a living faith and have a love strong enough to endure intense suffering. (Have a look at the prophet Jeremiah, his life is a good example of what is required.)

Fortunately, God has not given anyone the gift to predict the future with great accuracy – we probably couldn't cope with the vision. But there are likely to be several factors which come into play which will announce the transition time has arrived. The hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico in 2005 are set to increase in intensity due to Climate Change. So will the flooding due to excessive rainfall and the forest fires due to the very hot summers. But most experts foresee water shortages around the world being the prime cause for change coupled with a sudden shortage of fuel in the form of oil and gas.

To me it seems that mankind is currently standing before a firing squad on the subject of Climate Change. I have a nagging suspicion that without thinking we are on the point of shouting "FIRE". I just wish that we had more brains than our elected leaders to shout "STOP" before life on this planet becomes something of a joke.

With love,

***Andrew.***

P.S. When I shared this article with others, they found it somewhat pessimistic and gloomy. It was pointed out that I had said nothing about what could be done to avert the problems of Climate Change. So perhaps it is worth reminding ourselves of what we need to do.

- 1) Limit travel by air to an absolute minimum – Aircraft are doing the most damage to the climate.
- 2) Buy local produce and don't buy anything that has had to be transported by air.
- 3) Limit your use of the car and encourage car sharing as much as possible.
- 4) Turn the heating and air-conditioning down.
- 5) Stop leaving electrical equipment on standby.

Here is a start....if we did this globally; we might start to make a difference.

## ***The Mysterious Summer Game***

One of the great mysteries of life, when I was a small child, was represented by the sports results. These were read out each evening on the radio, or wireless as it was called then, just before the weather forecast and the six o'clock news. I was totally puzzled by the cricket results: "so many overs, so many wickets, so many maidens". Maidens? My family was not interested in sport, so no-one ever enlightened me. Then I grew up and married a man who is a life-long supporter of Somerset County cricket, who charts the course of history by what Somerset, or sometimes England, was doing in such-and-such a year, and who used to spend his summers with a portable radio pressed to his ear. Thanks to technological advances he now owns a tiny receiver with ear-pieces which fits into a jacket pocket. For me it was certainly a question of "if you can't beat'em, join'em". So I boned up on cricketing terminology, attended countless matches, often in filthy weather, and attempted to take an intelligent interest in this mysterious English game.

Cricket does not take itself as seriously as football, for which the Lord be thanked, and it sometimes throws up some funny stories. Many of these are associated with the recently deceased Fred Truman, fast bowler for Yorkshire and England and in later years a member of the radio Test commentary team. He was famous for being a down-to-earth sort, with a contempt for the pretensions of those who considered themselves his "betters". While bowling against the University in the Parks he skittled out a young man who clearly considered himself one of Oxford's finest. Trying to hide his dismay, he remarked, rather patronisingly, "Oh, good ball, Trueman!" "Aye," growled Fred, "'twere wasted on thee!"

As a demon bowler he stuck terror in to the hearts of opposing batsmen. During a Test Match in India, an Indian batsman asked to have the sight-screen moved. "Where would you like it situated?" inquired the umpire. "Between me and the bowler!" replied the batsman.

But God works in mysterious ways to deal with demon bowlers. A miracle took place one year in Taunton which enabled Somerset to

defeat Yorkshire. The Yorkshire team was residing in the Castle Hotel, not so far from the ground, but on the morning of the match Fred failed to wake up and present himself at the time when the team had to assemble, so he was not permitted to bowl. This failure on Fred's part was ascribed to the prayers of Peter Wight, Somerset batsman and devout Roman Catholic, who then proceeded to score a century.

☺ *Margaret Hollis*

### ***So Dark the Con of Man***

Humour hangs out in many unexpected corner-bars of life. Have you heard the one about the commuter reading *The Da Vinci Code* on the train? He was so irritated by its lame style that he threw it out of the window!

That may, of course, be an apocryphal story. Rather appropriate, given the subject-matter of the book. The commuter, however, had a choice about reading it; I did not.

When Dan Brown's blockbuster-seller gained an even higher profile courtesy of the High Court in London and Hollywood - that was even before the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury decided to give it free publicity in their Easter addresses - the prison chaplains at HMYOI Huntercombe decided everyone in the Chaplaincy Department should read the thing. So that we could respond to the many questions which were bound to come our way.

None of us were keen on boosting yet further the Random House sales figures, so a single, by now well-worn copy passed round the team. As a very lowly volunteer, I was one of the last to get my hands on it.

Let me say at once that I found it a page-turner. I really did want to know what happened next! And I have not laughed as much reading a book since *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* (also published by Random House) took most of us by surprise a generation ago.

One question I have not quite been able to settle in my mind is what genre *The Code* is. Fiction, obviously. But what sub-category? Not facton: the theology/Church history bears as much resemblance to reality as the 'science' in a *Dr Who* adventure does to actual astrophysics.

A thriller perhaps? Well, it would have been if written by Frederick Forsyth!

Comic fiction? Not intentionally!

A new form of writing possibly, for which we should have to coin a term: spirituality fiction? (On the lines of science fiction.) I think that is how many of the Huntercombe boys, starved of purpose, value, and love in their lives, have taken it.

On further reflection, however, I have a new theory: *The Da Vinci Code* more resembles the TV series *Hustle*. Most of the theological/historical scribble comes from the mouth of one character. The exposition (Chapters 35 ff) is an elaborate hoax because Sir Leigh (whom the author, in American fashion, keeps calling "Teabing") is an artist - a con artist.

Taken on this level, *The Da Vinci Code* has more intellectual integrity than I had first supposed. It is quite cleverly done.

Whether Sir Leigh himself believes the nonsense he spouts is not clear. It probably does not matter much. What did bother me as a reader was the immense implausibility of the conman ever getting away with any of it. How can our hero, a Harvard professor (presumably, therefore, reasonably intelligent and tolerably well educated) and a supposed international expert in his field, possibly fall for it?

If you have not yet read *The Da Vinci Code*, do! Read, enjoy, but don't believe. I had gently to remind several people at Huntercombe that in a work of fiction not everything characters say is true even by their own lights.

☺ *Jennifer Brooker*

## *The Bishopric*

As a child one of my favourite poets was Walter de la Mere. He wrote a poem called 'The Pretender'. While this poem addresses the mortality of man and the cunning of the wild, it displays a wry black humour, which perhaps was the more acceptable to a young mind due to the recency of birth and the apparent distance of mortality. But now that my hairs are grey, and timescales are somewhat reversed, I still enjoy its humour and hope you do too.

Due to the poet's lack of modern political correctness and the publication in which this may be printed, I have changed a few words here and there, moving us away from jingoistic imperialism and a sub-continental, somewhat disparaging interfaith setting to local geography and a C of E context. I hope the poet will forgive me.

In the park near the road that is called Nor-ham  
Is the haunt of an ancient redoubtable ram  
With sharp pointed horns on its head.  
When it sniffs out a bishop it scoops with its hooves, Till the parkland  
around is a parkland in grooves, And then it pretends to be dead.

O vicar, beware of such tactics as these,  
For if in compassion thou sink to thy knees,  
All thought of mere safety forgot,  
With a jerk of its horns the fell creature come to,  
And smiles as if saying, 'Ah friend, is it you?'  
When there's none to reply 'It is not'.

Perhaps we shall have seen some grooves in the park by the time this goes to press.

☺ *Ben Simpson*

## *Mainly about Music*

Samuel Wilberforce was a celebrated Bishop of Oxford in the 19th Century. He very much disliked Plainsong music, so one can imagine his displeasure, on attending Evensong, in one of our rural Parishes, to find that they sang the Psalms and the Canticles in Gregorian Plainsong. Moreover they sang it very, very badly. So badly, that he remonstrated about it to the vicar after the service. The vicar, who seemed to be remarkably ignorant of musical history, defended himself with the remark: "But my Lord Bishop, it was in Gregorian Plainsong that David sang the psalms to Saul." Wilberforce's reply was swift and brief: "Ah, at last I know why Saul hurled a spear at David."

☺ ☺

About 1900, a committee was assembled for producing a new edition of a popular Hymn Book. On this committee were both divines and musicians. Among the many suggestions for inclusion that they had to consider were several where the words made up terrible sentimental drivel, and at the same time there were others in which the words were good but the tunes musically thoroughly bad. A celebrated musician is supposed to have remarked on one occasion: "I suppose we will never be happy until the musicians write the words and the divines compose the music."

A few famous examples of verses from hymns now safely in the archives:

The hymn that began:  
Ever noble in our aims,  
Like St Philip and St James;  
Ever seeking to be good,  
Like St Simon and St Jude.

*The supplier of this article will stand a large drink to anyone who can produce two more lines in the same metre concerning St Margaret!*

A Saint's day hymn began:  
Let our choir, with voice sonorous,  
To the Maker sing in chorus.



"Thank you, Father," answered the young priest, "I am pleased that you are open to the new ideas of youth."

"However," said the elderly priest, "I'm afraid you've gone too far with the drive-thru confessional."

"But, Father," protested the young priest, "My confessions and the donations have nearly doubled since I began that!"

"I know son, but that flashing neon sign, "Toot'n & Tell or Go To Hell", just can't stay on the church roof!"

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A little girl became restless as the preacher's sermon dragged on and on. Finally, she leaned over to her mother and whispered, "Mommy, if we give him the money now, will he let us go?"

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Three boys are in the schoolyard bragging about their fathers. The first boy says, "My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a poem, they give him £50."

The second boy says, "That's nothing. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a song, they give him £100."

The third boy says, "I got you both beat. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a sermon. And it takes eight people to collect all the money!"

### ***Bloopers in Church Magazines***

Thursday night - Potluck supper. Prayer and medication to follow.

This afternoon there will be a meeting in the South and North ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends.

This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.

Helpers are needed! Please sign up on the information sheep.

Diana and Don request your presents at their wedding.

The concert held in Fellowship Hall was a great success. Special thanks are due to the minister's daughter, who laboured the whole evening at the piano, which as usual fell upon her.

The outreach committee has enlisted 25 visitors to make calls on people who are not afflicted with any church.

Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 to 8:30p.m. Please use the back door.

The audience is asked to remain seated until the end of the recession.

### ***The Electronic Church***

You know your church has gone over the electronic communications edge when:

- \* The pastor reads his sermon from a palm-held computer "notepad."
- \* There are cell-phone chargers in the pews.
- \* When the bells are rung at the end of the service, half the congregation reaches into pockets to see if it was for them.
- \* Everyone in the parish assumes everyone knows what "domain" means.
- \* People without email addresses are known as "the needy."
- \* During coffee and doughnuts after services, people are overheard wondering if confession by email would be "licit". Someone thinks "licit" is the name of a new software company.

\* A petition is circulating to partition the prayer room, creating a "beepers-on" section.

\* Five-year-olds say "deliver us some email" during the Our Father rather than "deliver us from evil."

### ***Parish Visiting – A Note!***

Recently Andrew Bunch was told the following story....

“A new curate arrived in the parish. Wishing to become better acquainted with the parishioners, he decided to make a series of home visits. Arriving at one house he knocked on the door but, although he received no answer, he was sure that there was someone at home. He took out a calling card and wrote on the back ‘**Revelations 3:20**’ and pushed it through the letter box.

The next Sunday he was surprised to find that the card had been returned and underneath his quotation was another ‘**Genesis 3:10**’. He picked up a Bible and after reading the quotation burst out laughing.”

For those of us who don't know our Bible by heart, the following may help....

#### **Revelation 3:20**

‘Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come in.’

#### **Genesis 3:10**

‘I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.’

## ***St Giles Church Roof Appeal: Dates for Your Diary***

### ***4th & 5th September – St Giles Fair***

During the fair a pig roast will be situated in the space between the churchyard and the war memorial. Support us with a healthy snack, then come to the church and have tea and cake.

### ***14th September – Church Crawl***

A tour to four outstanding Oxfordshire churches guided by Richard Lethbridge of the Oxford Historic Churches Trust, departing Water Eaton park and ride at 10.30 and returning at 4.30. Tickets are £20 and include lunch. Further details from John Clements on Ox 423478.

### ***23rd September – Lift up Your Eyes***

Opening of exhibition on roofs at St Giles, 6-8pm. Talk, paintings, exhibits, announcement of result of ‘Guess the Date’ competition, refreshments.

### ***5th October – Lunchtime lecture***

Beautiful and little known churches of Oxfordshire by Richard Lethbridge. Tickets at the door.

### ***19 November – Harpsichord recital***

Recital by Peter Ward-Jones in honour of St Cecilia. 3pm followed by tea and patisserie in the church hall sponsored by Maison Blanc. £7.50

### ***6 January 2007 – Twelfth Night***

Guided tour of St John's, followed by mince pies and coffee in the Hall. Details available later.

### ***Don't throw it out – sell it***

If you are thinking of getting rid of anything that could be sold, take it to Mallam's the auctioneers (St Michael St, Ox 241358), and they will donate the proceeds less their commission (2%) to the Appeal at your request.

***John Clements***

*Dates for your diary ... August 2006*

<b>Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>THE TRANSFIGURATION</b>
<b>Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup></b>	Start of St Margaret's Pilgrimage
<b>Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>
<b>Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>The Assumption</b>
8.00 pm	Sung Eucharist <i>at St Margaret's</i>
<b>Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup></b>	
2.00 pm	Wedding <i>at St Giles'</i>
	End of St Margaret's Pilgrimage
<b>Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>
<b>Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>
<b>Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>THE TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>
10.30 am	Patronal Festival <i>at St Giles'</i>
4.30 pm	Confirmation Class

**Weekly Services at St Giles' & St Margaret's**

<b>Sunday</b>		
8:00am	Holy Communion	St Margaret
8:00am	Holy Communion	St Giles
10:30am	Parish Eucharist <i>with Sunday School &amp; Crèche</i>	St Margaret
10:30am	Mattins & Holy Communion	St Giles
6:00pm	Evening Prayer	St Margaret
6:30pm	Evensong	St Giles
<b>Monday</b>		
5:30pm	Evening Prayer	St Giles
<b>Tuesday</b>		
7:00am	Morning Prayer	St Margaret
5:30pm	Evening Prayer	St Giles
7:15pm	Eucharist	St Margaret
<b>Wednesday</b>		
7:00am	Morning Prayer	St Margaret
12:30pm	Eucharist	St Giles
5:30pm	Evening Prayer	St Giles
<b>Thursday</b>		
7:00am	Morning Prayer	St Margaret
8:00am	Iona Liturgy	St Giles
10:00am	Holy Communion	St Margaret
5:30pm	Evening Prayer	St Giles
<b>Friday</b>		
7:00am	Morning Prayer	St Margaret
1:15pm	Taizé Service	St Giles
5:30pm	Evening Prayer	St Giles
<b>Saturday</b>		
9:00am	Morning Prayer	St Giles
5:30pm	Evening Prayer	St Margaret