

**St Mary's Church
North Mymms**



**Amber and Silver Gilt Tankard
Nuremburg 1659**

40p

May 2009

www.stmarysnorthmymms.org.uk

Parish Diary for May 2009

Fri 1	Philip and James, Apostles 10.00am-12.00 noon	Pramsters meet in St Michael's Room
Sun 3	The Fourth Sunday of Easter 8.00am 9.30am 11.00am 6.30pm	Holy Communion Parish Eucharist with Junior Church Home Communion to the Sick Evensong with the Choir
Mon 4	<i>No Team Communion – Bank Holiday</i>	
Tues 5	10.00am-1.00pm 7.00-9.30pm 8.15pm	Vocations meeting in St Michael's Room Art Workshop in St Michael's Room Team Council meeting St Michael's Birchwood
Wed 6	12.00noon-2.00pm	Oasis meet in St Michael's Room
Thurs 7	10.00am-2.00pm	Carers meet in St Michael's Room
Fri 8	10.00am-12.00 noon	Pramsters meet in St Michael's Room
Sat 9	10.00am-3.15pm 10.30am-12noon	Year of the Child: Children's activities at St Albans Abbey Christian Aid Coffee Morning at URC, Brookmans Park
Sun 10	The Fifth Sunday of Easter	<i>Christian Aid Week begins</i>
	8.00am 9.30am 6.30pm	Holy Communion (CW*) Parish Eucharist with Junior Church BCP Evensong
Mon 11	9.30am	Team Communion at St John's, Lemsford
Tues 12	11.00am 7.00-9.30pm	Friends of the Royal Academy of Arts visit church Art Workshop in St Michael's Room
Wed 13	12.00noon-2.00pm	Oasis meet in St Michael's Room
Thurs 14	Matthias, the Apostle 10.00am-2.00pm	Carers meet in St Michael's Room
Fri 15	10.00am-12.00 noon	Pramsters meet in St Michael's Room
Sat 16	10.00am-4.00pm 11.00am	St Peter's London Colney PCC Quiet Day in St Michael's Room Burial of ashes – John Heskins

Parish Diary for May 2009

Sun 17	The Sixth Sunday of Easter	
	8.00am	Holy Communion
	9.30am	Parish Eucharist with Junior Church
	6.30pm	Holy Communion with prayers for healing
Mon 18	9.30am	Team Communion at St Michael, Birchwood
Wed 20	12.00noon-2.00pm	Oasis meet in St Michael's Room
Thurs 21	Ascension Day	
	8.00pm	Team Holy Communion at St Mary's
Fri 22	10.00am-12.00 noon	Pramsters meet in St Michael's Room
Sat 23	Church open daylight hours	
Sun 24	The Seventh Sunday of Easter	
	8.00am	Holy Communion (CW*)
	9.30am	Parish Eucharist with Junior Church & Baptism of Camille Edie Nicolaus
	11.30am	Holy Baptisms: Grace, Scarlett, Libby & Lola Rowe
	6.30pm	Team Choral Evensong at St John's, Lemsford on the occasion of their 150 th anniversary
Mon 25	<i>No Team Communion – Bank Holiday</i>	
Tues 26	2.15pm	Women's Fellowship meeting in St Michael's Room
Wed 27	from 9.15am	CTNM day trip to Winchester
	12.00noon-2.00pm	Oasis meet in St Michael's Room
Thurs 28	10.00am-2.00pm	Carers meet in St Michael's Room
Fri 29	10.00am-12.00 noon	Pramsters meet in St Michael's Room
Sat 30	12.00 noon	Churchyard working party
Sun 31	Pentecost	
	8.00am	Holy Communion (CW*)
	9.30am	Parish Eucharist with Junior Church
	6.30pm	BCP Evensong

CW - Common Worship

* - Traditional Language

BCP - Book of Common Prayer

WEEKLY MEETINGS in ST MICHAEL'S ROOM

Wednesday	12.00noon-2.00pm	Oasis
Thursday	10.00am – 2.00pm	Carers
Friday	10.00am – 12.00 noon	Pramsters

Giving thanks for another year!

There's something appropriate about taking stock just after the great celebrations of Easter. So it's in this season of "Easter new" that we meet for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. It's an opportunity to look back in thankfulness that we've navigated our way well through the highs and lows, the celebrations and the reflections – all we've shared together. Some dear friends are no longer with us but happily we've welcomed some new ones to join us on the journey. It's the time when we express our gratitude to those who've served us well on PCC, or in some capacity of church life.

We've all gained and learned and grown and are immensely grateful for the experience. Some people will be standing down and others will – eagerly and joyfully - step up to new roles! We are aware that contemporary life makes great demands on those who work, care for families (second as well as first generations) and this affects people's availability and willingness to serve in any voluntary capacity. All areas of our community are affected and we have to bear with this for the present as we collectively review our priorities and re-examine our sense of shared commitment in the light of this. As with many of us, I frequently wonder what our communities – as well as our churches – will be like, how they will function, in the years to come.

We are hugely appreciative to Russell for serving St Mary's so well and so faithfully for six years as Church Warden. Russell steps down at the APCM but will continue to serve as a member of the PCC. Happily, at St Mary's we continue to be blessed with lots of talent and energy – it's just a question of discernment about where we place them! For in this community of grace, church life offers the opportunity not to 'volunteer' but to exercise a God-given ministry – for the benefit of everyone. We trust that God has given us who we need and what we need for the things we are to do in the year ahead.

One exciting initiative which we shall launch at the APCM is the commitment as a church to focus our energy and activities over the next year on caring for our creation. Please find at the centre of this magazine the paper: 'Righting the Wrongs – Restoring the Balance' for you to pull out and keep as a reference paper.

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You'll see that we'll be exploring this vital subject in all aspects of our practical, spiritual and community life and everyone is invited to be involved! Our thanks go to Sheila Hoile for using her God-given talents in provoking the PCC to think this through and then to masterminding the launch of the Year of Action.

I conclude with a striking comment from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams:

The world asks: "what does this person own".
Jesus asks: "what do they do with what they have?"

May we use wisely all that God has blessed us with.
With love and prayers
Sally

Dramatised Reading of the Passion: Palm Sunday 2009

Each year on Palm Sunday we re-live the story of Christ's Passion, from the entry into Jerusalem to his crucifixion, through a dramatised reading of the Gospel. Members of the congregation and Junior Church take part providing action, mime and voices and using the whole church, gallery included. It is very powerful and moving, with the children as disciples and Heather Dainton-Smith as Jesus. Special mention should be made of Colin our organist, who played so sensitively throughout, especially for the rending of the veil and for the crucifixion scene. We were led gently into the meditation as the church became dark. I have not mentioned all the many who took part, but I feel the congregation are full of thanks to them for a memorable experience.

PS. I must tell you of an unusual incident. The 'cast' was already dressed and about to lead the congregation out and round the church before the service. But then we checked all the parts – NO Pilate and his wife, or High Priest – oh dear! Where were Amanda, Adrian and Kevin? At the last moment all three arrived breathlessly. They had been bellringing. "We're so sorry" they cried, "but we were locked in the Belfry". Well!! One hears all sorts of excuses, but I have never heard that one before!

Chris Willis

CHILDREN'S GOOD FRIDAY WORKSHOP

We were delighted to welcome lots of children to the Good Friday Workshop at St Mary's - they kept on arriving - 35 in total! We began by thinking about the story of Good Friday for which the children had find various bits of 'key evidence' hidden around the area outside St Michael's room (purple cloth, a hammer, the cross, 'swords', a crown of thorns, etc). The children brought them back (including some 'extras' which were hastily returned to their original place!) and then pieced the story together. Then there were different activities - drawing, making a collage for the cross, building the Easter garden directed by Chris and Rachel, making hot cross buns and finally a 'colourful people chain'. The chain represented each child present - and all God's children - and we put it around the cross at our time of worship together at the end of the morning.









Here are some comments from the children:

"I love coming to this church, everyone is so friendly and happy!"

James Stevenson said:

I like singing
words in
the church
I enjoyed ma-
king my
hot cross
buns, I like
making
the Easter
garden.

Layah Wiggs said:

- 18/4/09
- † Children's good friday special 
- † On good friday I went to Church
and had a lot of fun and this is 
- † What I did: 
- † We searched the churchyard for things about the
Easter story. Lucy and I found some nails and
the cross. When all the things were collected
Sally told us what part each thing played in the
Easter story.
- † After this I ~~did~~ decorated an egg, 
and helped with the Easter garden. 
- † Layah St. Mary's children's church 

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Rhys Hatswell, one of our younger helpers, said "It was a fun day, the kids were really good and I liked the food!"

Chris Willis writes:

When the Easter Garden was completed by the children, a very heavy stone was found to block the entrance to the tomb. Someone asked: "How did anyone manage to move the big stone when Jesus' body was there?"

A little girl replied: "An angel moved it. Angels can do anything."

Hurrah for angels! There are also lots of angels at St Mary's who help in so many different ways.

So thank you to all the children and 'big kids' who joined in.

Getting a new Bishop – finishing the job!

The next Bishop of St Albans, The Rt. Revd Alan Smith, will be installed in the Cathedral on Saturday 19 September. That exciting moment brings to a climax a process officially begun eighteen months earlier when the last Bishop, Christopher Herbert, announced in January 2008 that he would resign later in that year.

Some months ago this magazine ran a series of articles about the process by which the Vacancy-in-See Committee in the Diocese and the Crown Nominations Committee of the Church of England nominated 2 names to the Prime Minister. In January we learned that the Queen had approved the nomination of Dr Alan Smith and his appointment was announced both by 10 Downing Street and at a press conference in St Albans at exactly 11.00am on the appointed day – by tradition a Tuesday.

Even then there were important formalities to complete.

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On Friday 13 February, after Evensong in the Cathedral, the building was closed for the formal Election of the new Bishop by the College of Canons. The College consists of the Dean and Residentiary Canons of the Abbey and Honorary Canons who are the Suffragan Bishops, the Archdeacons and a defined number of parish clergy and lay people honoured by the title Canon. Each member of the College is required to be present or, unless absence is authorised, is pronounced “contumacious.” Her Majesty’s Congé d’Elire and Letter Missive are read permitting the College to elect a new Bishop, though offering only one candidate! All the members of the College voted “placet” in favour of Bishop Smith, “a man prudent and discreet, laudable for his life and conversation, free to be appointed, of due age.”

Six weeks later on 31 March at St Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, in the City of London, the Archbishop of Canterbury presided at the Confirmation of the Election. A service of worship included a remarkable sitting of a court of law. A table was placed in front of the altar, 5 lawyers resplendent in wigs were seated. In front of the Vicar General of the Province of Canterbury one lawyer (the Proctor) introduced himself as “appearing on behalf of the College of Canons of St Albans”, another (the Advocate) “on behalf of the Bishop-elect”.

Letters Patent from The Queen were read, the Advocate confirmed that Bishop Alan really was Bishop Alan, and the Proctor that the correct procedures had been followed at the Election. He produced (that is, produced) a document to back up his claim.

Then Bishop Alan took the Oaths of allegiance to the Queen and due obedience to the Archbishop, then the Declaration of Assent to the faith as received by the C of E (as for all clergy on taking up a new post). The Vicar General read the sentence or decree of the Court, conferring on the new Bishop spiritual jurisdiction over the Diocese. Finally, the Archbishop delivered a charge to the new Bishop outlining his responsibilities and challenges.

Is that all complete? Not quite. Before installation, traditionally known as Enthronement, the new Bishop must have an audience with the Queen and, after being introduced by the Clerk to the Closet (presently the Bishop of Guildford), he must pay homage and ‘kiss hands’. Then Bishop Alan is ready to be our Bishop.

Chris Foster

Celebrating Pesach – Passover

We marked Maundy Thursday this year a little differently, with a celebration of Pesach, or Passover and a Seder meal. The date happened to coincide with the Jewish festival, which began on the Wednesday, so we were sharing this important festival with our Jewish brothers and sisters.

The Seder, which means 'order', has many parts to it. Essentially, it is a reminder and celebration of the time when God rescued his people from slavery in Egypt and brought them into freedom and a home of their own. We're not sure that we got all of them in the correct order, but we had a go! 35 of us met in St Michael's Room where tables had been covered with white cloth and candles with a special plate containing symbols for the meal: salt water, for the tears of our ancestors; bitter herbs for their suffering; 'charoseth', a sweet and delicious mixture of apples, nuts and cinnamon which symbolise the mortar binding the bricks the Israelites had to make under Pharaoh's harsh regime; a scorched bone reminding us of the sacrifices offered to God in acknowledgement of forgiveness of sins; green vegetables (we used parsley) for dipping, which reminded us of the fertile land where the Israelites were to settle; and in the centre a scorched egg which represented God's never-ending providence and blessing to his people. Finally, we had matzoh, unleavened bread reminding us that the Israelites had to leave in a hurry and there was no time to prove their bread.

We listened again to the story of the original Passover and ate the symbolic food and 4 times washed it down with a glass of wine! We were allowed to do this leaning to the left – again, symbolic of the fact that once the people were enslaved and now they are free to recline; slaves would eat standing or sitting upright, but free people ate reclining on cushions. There were questions asked why this night was different, asked traditionally by the youngest among us and this our young chorister, Emma, willingly did for us. She also entered into the fun of having to find the missing piece of matzoh which had been hidden earlier – her 'reward' was chocolate!

Half-way through the Seder, we enjoyed a more substantial meal of either a delicious chicken casserole or lamb. A wine glass had been poured and left for Elijah, along with the door left ajar, as a sign of welcome to latecomers. Hospitality and the welcome of strangers continues to be important to the Jewish people. The great significance of Elijah to the Jews is that he would be the one to appear before the Messiah, who, it is thought one day, would reveal his identity at Passover.

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We concluded our Passover with the blessing of the fruit of the vine and asked God that our service (which this meal had been – not just a social occasion) be acceptable to him. Then, in recognition that not all people were free but the hope that one day all would be, we said “Next year in Jerusalem!” and downed our fourth and final glass of wine!

From here we picked up with our Christian heritage and, abandoning everything (symbolic of the hasty departure of our ancestors from Egypt) we made our way into church to share bread and wine at the Eucharist. For us, the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, has indeed been revealed at the Passover when he shared it with his disciples before he was crucified. We stayed together a little longer as the church furnishings and decorations were removed in silence and a vigil began as we remembered our Lord’s suffering that dreadful night.

So much drama and symbolism! We do this, along with our Jewish friends, to remember what we share together in God’s blessings, how far we have come and how the journey continues as more and more join us.

Our thanks to Diana who prepared the special Seder ingredients, to Joyce Clark for the delicious chicken, everyone else who helped: Avril, Di, Gill, Colette, Dorothy, Chris and Sally and to everyone who met together to share in the wider drama of God’s story with his people.

St Mary’s Away Giving by Lynda Potter

In 1986 the BBC TV programme ‘That’s Life’, presented by Esther Rantzen, appealed to viewers for their help in conducting a survey on child abuse. The BBC also ran a helpline after the programme for adults and children who wished to call. The lines became jammed with children who wished to remain anonymous, but confided details of terrible cruelty and sexual abuse. Three thousand adults (of whom 90 per cent were women) then completed a BBC questionnaire, in which 90 per cent of them recounted, mostly for the first time, the experience of sexual abuse in their childhood.

A special *Childwatch* team was set up to read the questionnaires and make a programme on child abuse. They found that children today were still suffering as children had in the past. The suffering described by adult survivors of sexual abuse in childhood was echoed by today’s children.

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Adults and children told the same story - cruelty happens at home, most abusers are members of their own family, they have no-one to turn to, they think no-one will ever believe them if they ask for help. Yet they felt able to confide in an unseen, unknown telephone counsellor.

The *Childwatch* team then met with child care professionals from both the statutory and the voluntary sectors - including the NSPCC, Kidscape, Great Ormond Street Hospital and social services departments - to discuss how to establish a permanent free telephone helpline, which would provide a way of comforting and advising those who could not be reached in any other way.

As a result, ChildLine was launched in October 1986. The response that first night and subsequent nights exceeded all predictions, with 50,000 children trying to ring. ChildLine quickly took root in the minds of children as 'their' line. Since then, ChildLine has counselled more than one million children, with approximately 4000 children calling every day., but they are still only able to answer about 2,300 of the daily callers,

Unlike most other freephone helplines, ChildLine offers confidentiality to children unless their lives are in immediate danger. The tragedy of child abuse is that the majority of children suffer in silence because they have been told that if they seek help they will not be believed, or they are threatened into silence, or they fear that intervention will inevitably shatter such happiness as they have, for example, break up the family. Children who ring ChildLine to disclose abuse are often encouraged to seek help from "trusted adults", the aim being to protect the child from harm causing as little ancillary damage as possible.

Calls to ChildLine do not appear on phone bills. Despite most mobile phone operators charging for freephone 0800 calls, calls to ChildLine's number are not charged by any UK mobile network. Calls are free, can be made at any time, day or night and children can ring about any problem, if a problem is important to children and young people, it is important to ChildLine.

St Mary's has supported ChildLine for the last two years. For more information visit www.childline.org.uk or www.nspcc.org.uk.



Baroque – Style in the Age of Magnificence (1620 – 1800)

If you did not already know, the Church at North Mymms is very fortunate to own a piece of art that is both magnificent and priceless; the Amber Tankard was donated to the North Mymms Church in 1751 by Dame Lydia Mews.

Due to the significance of the piece it would not be possible to look after it at church and it has been on long term loan to the British Museum. The British Museum contacted the PCC and asked if the Amber Tankard could be loaned to the Victoria and Albert Museum for their exhibition 'Baroque'. After some Faculty paperwork (formal permission) was rushed through the PCC voted unanimously for the Amber Tankard to be exhibited by the V&A.

Diana was due to accompany Sally to the opening night of the exhibition, where exhibitors, other contributors and all sorts of arty people had been invited to a private viewing. Unfortunately Diana's accident meant she could not go so I went instead.

The first room of the exhibition was 'The First Global Style'. From the mid seventeenth century Europe was dominated by absolute monarchs but most importantly the Roman Catholic Church grew in power to have ultimate influence over the European empires. The fashion that blossomed during this period was termed Baroque, and had a purpose; to demonstrate the opulence of the times. The influence of this impressive style was seen in painting, sculptures, architecture and garden landscapes as well as being reflected in theatre and public events. Baroque was the first art style to really engage all the senses and as a result had a global impact.

We walked through the 'Art and Performance' and 'Architecture and Performance' rooms. Whilst the style did not appeal to me personally, I found it all too fussy and over the top, I could appreciate the dramatic and moving effect of the pieces and the attention to detail was mind blowing. Artists of the time were able to produce crowd scenes depicting thousands of individual people in their pictures that would only be attempted by 'Computer Generated Images' in modern pictures and films.

The need to convey opulence led artists and sculptors to seek out expensive materials, the most common being gold, everything in the exhibition appeared gold or gold-plated to me. Continued Over

However, the need to display rare and precious materials as a demonstration of wealth led to all sorts of curio and art for arts sake, indeed our own Amber Tankard appears too delicate to be of actual use and even though it is of usable size and dimension I cannot help but think it was craved to be displayed not actually drunk from. The tankard is one of a pair, one depicts the seven vices and ours depicts the seven virtues. It is a stunning piece and Sally and I felt it dominated the other pieces on display in the 'Marvellous Materials' room of the exhibition, although we may have been a little biased! We made a real fuss when we got to the plaque under the tankard that states the 'Amber Tankard is loaned with the kind permission of the Vicar and Church Wardens of North Mymms Church'.

As we walked through 'The Theatre' and 'The Square' it was abundantly clear just how significant the style had been on shaping cultural spaces and moods that are still evident today. By the mid sixteenth century the situ of absolute regimes across Europe and the patronage of the Roman Catholic Church led to an available wealth to match the ruling powers' vanity. No longer was the treasury needed to finance wars to the extent it had in previous centuries and a flurry of palace and church building took place across Europe to pay homage to the seats of power. Many of the palaces and churches we see today with endless rooms of dazzling architecture and formal gardens were built in this period and this style spread across Europe during the 1700's.

The influence of the Roman Catholic Church is very evident in the paintings with many bearing witness to the stories of the Bible. Human figures have an important central role in most of the paintings and therefore the genre lends itself to depicting the stories of Christ. Emotional religious scenes depicting dramas as if in freeze frame record facial expression and gestures that seek to capture the imagination of the viewer and draw them in to the drama. Similar treatment is afforded to the portraits of rulers giving them a seeming magnificence and power that is overpowering and no doubt served its purpose. The final two rooms, 'Sacred Spaces' and 'Secular Spaces' appealed to me the least due to the overpowering use of gold and intricate design. It just was not my taste but as I hinted before I could admire the talent and skill that went in to producing the pieces of art on display.

I had a lovely evening and we were treated to some live opera and some very nice champagne and canapés. I felt very privileged to be able to go with Sally and if you get an opportunity to go to the V&A and see the exhibition it is on until 19th July and it really is very good.

Tracy Hatswell

North Mymms - Parish and People - *by Dorothy Colville*

In researching my piece on our trip to the V&A I found this article by Dorothy Colville, written in 1971, for the Brookmans Park Newsletter. I make no apology for reproducing an edited version as I think it is delightful.

Chapter 5 - The Amber Tankard

Many ancient churches possess unusual treasures, and North Mymms church is no exception, its unusual treasure being the unique 300-year-old amber tankard. Made in Nuremberg in 1659, its eight panels of amber are set in straps of silver gilt. The panels are carved in low relief with figures symbolic of the virtues, lively animals decorate rim and base, and St. George and the dragon appear on the lid. Only one other tankard of nearly like design and workmanship is known to exist, and that has the vices where the North Mymms tankard has the virtues.

The Rev. G. Staunton Batty, vicar from 1880 until 1911, left a description of the figures carved on the amber panels. They are (1) Industry with distaff, (2) Faith with cross and chalice, (3) Fortitude with column, (4) Justice with sword and scales, (5) Charity with children, (6) Hope with anchor, (7) Temperance with ewer and goblet, (8) Innocence with book and lamb.

This unique tankard was left to the church by Dame Lydia Mews, who died in 1751. She rented North Mymms Place from the Duke of Leeds, whose family were its owners from 1685 until 1799. She was the fourth daughter of George Jarvis, of Islington, and became the wife of Sir Peter Mews, M.P. for Christchurch, Hampshire, and chancellor of the diocese of Winchester. She was born in 1676 and her will was made when she was about fifty years old. Dame Lydia had no children of her own, but she was probably a "favourite aunt" and a kindly lady to all if we believe the inscription on the memorial which her nephew, Benjamin Clerke, erected on the north wall of the church.

By her will Dame Lydia left a large charity to the poor of the parish, the amber tankard to the church and exact instructions as to her burial. This was not a whim, nor was it sentiment. As the wife of a Member of Parliament one would expect her to have had respect for the laws of the land, but, like so many wealthy people of her day she objected to being buried "in woollen," therefore she stated which of her nightdresses was to be used for her burial.

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Two other clauses in the will of this interesting, strong-minded lady are part of the history of the parish. The large sum of £200 left to be invested and the interest to be spent on buying bread for "distribution on Sunday to such poor as attend Divine Service at the Church of this parish" was faithfully observed. Her "bread charity," with those of Mistress Anne Hunter and Miss Holmes, was dispensed regularly until 1932, when all the charities were consolidated with the approval of the Charity Commissioners and the funds used in other useful ways.

The story of the amber tankard, however, is very different. The original use of the tankard was as a beer mug, and although Dame Lydia's executors were instructed to see that it stood upon the altar of the church it is doubtful if this was ever carried out. Usually it was kept in a safe place and only brought out to show to important visitors, though it would seem that it did at some time receive rough treatment, for in 1806 the churchwardens paid £2/1/- for repairs.

The years went by, until at the end of the nineteenth century the tankard became "news." The bells needed repairs - nothing had been done to them since Briant, the famous bell-founder of Hertford, had re-hung them in 1806 - and the question arose of where to get the money for the needed repairs.

The parish magazine for May 1901 reports as follows:

"The vestry meeting called for the 24th ult. to decide whether the amber tankard was to be submitted to the Chancellor's decision as to his permitting its sale to enable us to ring with safety our church bells proved rather a stormy one, but as it has been reported in the Herts Advertiser at length it is only needful to say that a poll has been arranged for Saturday the 4th inst. from five to eight in the afternoon, in order that each person who is on the list of parochial electors may freely give his own individual and independent opinion as to what he or she thinks advisable in the matter. May all uncharitableness, as we so often pray, be put entirely away from us and let us give one another credit for voting in the way our conscience and sense of right may direct us!"

The vicar was apprehensive for the safety of the tankard, and his daughter, when recalling those days, wrote in 1965: "My father was afraid it would be stolen and he used to bring it into the vicarage at night and place it in his bedroom. I know amber tankard thieves were a real fear when I was young.

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Now, there is a memorial to Lady Mews on the north wall of the church and in the midst of all this upheaval an urn from its top fell down and cracked the seat below. Some people said Lady Mews was angry at the thought of her gift being sold. Others said she wants to show that she knows that the bells and church need repairing, but this did not decide the controversy."

The June issue of the magazine tersely reports another stormy meeting: "The poll demanded at the vestry meeting, held on the 24th April, as to whether the sale of the amber tankard for repairs in the belfry should be submitted to the decision of the chancellor of the diocese, resulted in a very decisive opinion against the adoption of such a course, the number being 36 for and 103 against it. The amber tankard remains, therefore, the property of the church."

As so much anger and dissension had been caused among the parishioners, and as the amber tankard was a very valuable piece of property which was never used in the way its donor, Dame Lydia Mews, had desired, the vestry consented to the tankard being offered on permanent loan to the British Museum. It is safer there and many more people can enjoy the beauty of it than would be the case were it always at home in North Mymms.

A glance up at the little urn which tops Dame Lydia's memorial will show that the part nearest the wall is chipped and removal of the cushion on the seat below will show the crack made so many years ago - proof, if needed, of a little story disclosed so short a time ago.

Dorothy Colville, 1971

Diana Glanfield sends many, many thanks and her love to everyone who sent cards, flowers, gifts and good wishes after her car accident.

Knowing people were thinking about her helped enormously towards her recovery.

Thank you, St Mary's, for all your support, love and friendship.

Diana Glanfield

The Green Belt



As no doubt you are aware, there is now a great threat to our wild life because of the East of England regional proposal to build on green belt land.



Unfortunately, if this proposal for **ten thousand new houses** in the Welwyn and Hatfield area is successful, it will be a policy that **cannot be reversed with a change of government.** The green belt was introduced to protect us against urban sprawl.; the loss of community and identity as villages are swallowed up by the spread of concrete.

In 1976 there was a severe threat to the village of Welham Green with a proposal for a large building development enveloping it. Good community minded citizens, including our own Clive Bennett, formed the North Mymms Green Belt Society to combat the threat. Thankfully they were successful. Ever since then, with an ever growing membership, the society has managed to fight off other proposals to concrete over our countryside, thus preserving our delightful villages of Little Heath, Welham Green and Brookmans Park. It is a pity that our neighbours Broxbourne and Cheshunt didn't have a strong local organisation to prevent the awful sprawl that has occurred there. The North Mymms Green Belt Society have kept membership to only £1 per person, per year, so please make sure you renew your membership or join to help save your countryside. If you need a membership form I would be happy to oblige.

Once the countryside is concreted over, it is permanent. The enjoyment of the countryside for our children/ grandchildren and all future generations is denied. The countryside benefits are not only physical e.g. walking, cycling running, horse riding but spiritual also. Mental health practitioners have realised the benefits of nature. Sufferers are taken for nature walks as part of their rehabilitation, realising the spiritual healing powers of the natural world.

How can children brought up in the concrete jungles of skyscrapers appreciate God's world and therefore respect it? For all our futures, please do all you can to prevent the destruction of the green belt.

Craig Rees

A word from your editor—Tracy Hatswell

Easter is a busy month for the church and there has been lots going on. The shocking news of Diana's car accident and then gratefully received news of her miraculous escape and steady if slow recovery were received by all of us in our church family and it became very obvious just how much Diana does in her role as church warden.

Her familiar face welcoming us to Sunday service has been missed and I have missed her forthright opinion which she has on all things. I had asked Diana her opinion on The Shack which I know she had read and was not affronted when she reported that she had not enjoyed it as it was too American and Disney; the complete opposite view to my own! I then received an email from Lynn Carey saying "I just wanted to say like you I couldn't put the book down, and I didn't really want it to finish. It took me a bit longer to read, as family commitments, but I can actually say that it was really enjoyable." Then I had a giggle with Maurice when he said "I read The Shed and thought it very thought provoking!" How so very 'English Gentleman' to change it to shed from shack!!

However, these various conversations and comments did highlight for me the pleasure that comes from a balance of views and personalities and made the recommendation to read the book so worthwhile.

To be able to speak freely without fear of retribution or being ostracized is a luxury we often take for granted. In the safety of our church we do not fear speaking out loud or offering opinion. Even when we know our views may not be appreciated by others we do not suppress them but share them.

Jesus was not as lucky as we are. He suffered the ultimate loss for voicing his beliefs, indeed many of the people around the world today still cannot speak out freely and there is still so much to achieve before freedom of speech is accepted across the world.

Jesus tried to teach us that if we have a community of respect and service to each other, the basis premise of "treat others as you yourself would like to be treated", then it is possible to have community of humanity. We serve each other by our individual example. In acknowledging with love and respect each others opinion we demonstrate by example that freedom can be achieved, and I pray eventually this will be across the globe.

From the Parish Church Registers

Ashes

2 April John Fuller
5 April Lily Constance Amelia Weightman

Burial

17 April Marthe Amelie Antonia Jardine



The Parish Office is open Tuesday and Thursday 9.00am to 1.30pm.

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Next Copy Date

Contributions for the June 2009 magazine edition please by
FRIDAY 22 May 2009 to the Editorial Team:

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Only the current registers, (Baptisms from March 1980; Weddings from January 1999, Burials from March 1984 and Services from July 1996) are stored at the church.

All previous church registers, and parish magazines, are stored at the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, County Hall, Hertford, SG13 8EJ. (01992) 555105, to ensure they are adequately preserved.

General:

Enquiries concerning Baptisms, Marriages, Blessings of Civil Marriages and publication of Banns of Marriage should be directed to the Vicar, who should also be contacted for all matters concerning Communion of the Sick and Confessions.

Bodies of all parishioners may be brought into their Parish Church for a Funeral Service, prior to burial or cremation.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK



10TH - 16TH MAY 2009

Christian Aid Week is fast approaching: it seems to come round faster and faster!

The house-to-house collection, which is the main event for us, is organised by Churches Together in North Mymms. It is a big task, and unfortunately we are not able to cover every road in the area, but we do what we can. We never have enough collectors, but more is accomplished by a bit of teamwork. It is a lot easier, both psychologically and physically, to go out with two or more people knocking at doors. Collecting from a long road with two people is so much easier and less daunting.

So if you feel you could collect for us, but don't want to do it on your own, I would be pleased to hear from you. If, however, you feel that you cannot possibly do the above, posting envelopes through letterboxes would be extremely helpful too.

We have a great lack of young collectors – there is fast approaching a time when younger people (younger than me at least!) will have to take over; where are you all? Last year in North Mymms and Brookmans Park we raised £3183 and the amount collected nationally was well over £4 million, so it really does bring in the money.

Also on **Saturday 9th May** we are holding a coffee morning at the United Reformed Church in Brookmans Park from 10.30am till 12 noon. There will be cakes, plants, Traidcraft and books for sale. Please come and join us for a convivial morning and bring your friends too! (Plants, cakes and books for this event will be gratefully received).

Di Lee 01707 654435