



# St Mary's Northchurch Newsletter



**Parish Room Bookings:**  
**Sabina Harvey**  
Mobile: 079799 14449  
[harvey.sabina48@googlemail.com](mailto:harvey.sabina48@googlemail.com)

## March 2015

**Church enquiries to:**  
**Revd Jonathan Gordon**  
**01442 871547**  
[revjagordon@googlemail.com](mailto:revjagordon@googlemail.com)

### Is God a bad lot?

I keep tuning into interviews with Stephen Fry on the radio and he is a very entertaining person to listen to alongside his writings and television appearances. A few weeks ago he was asked if he was confronted with God what he would say. As he is an atheist this from one perspective might be a challenge, but he went on the offensive: "I'd say bone cancer in children? What's that about? How dare you create a world in which there is such misery that is not our fault." If you are a person of faith then the question is how does suffering equate with a good God, but if you are an atheist then you have to find another way of responding to the question of why there is suffering and evil present in the world. You can't bring God into it or blame God if you don't believe. Maybe all these questions take us round in circles.

I have read some of the atheist literature and books by Sam Wells, Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins and the way they describe God's character I end up agreeing with them. The God they describe is not the God I believe in or think even exists. A component of their argument is based on reason and science, but they possibly have more emotional appeal when they can point to the violence of extremists who justify a whole range of actions on the basis of faith. The actions of Isis in Syria and its regions are a combination of medieval brutality alongside skilful use of modern technology, which in part are a deliberate way of showing that they reject all western values and its way of life. In the face of such provocation then the question is easily asked of whether faith causes more harm than good.

I would agree with Stephen Fry in part by focusing on the perception that this world is God's creation. There is suffering and evil in it, but I don't think God wills it or gets some perverse delight out of human misfortune. As a counter balance and in defence of God, there is a film called Selma that is at the cinema, which tells the story of the Civil Rights Campaign led by Martin Luther King, Jr., to secure voting rights for the black citizens of the United States of America in 1965. This was a campaign largely resourced by local churches who passionately believed that God did not will oppression and injustice. In the face of these things a person could not be passive but seek to change things and King was quite prepared to call Jesus a revolutionary. This was a faith inspired movement for human good that was for the benefit of all, irrespective of what they believed, and shaped by a faith in a God of love and justice. This is the God I believe in and the God who in thanksgiving we worship.

Rev Jonathan Gordon

#### **St Mary's Summer Fete 4<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

This event will be running from 12.30 – 4pm this year in the rectory, school and church grounds. There will be all the usual attractions for all age-groups and the money raised will be divided between the Hertfordshire Air Ambulance Service, Phakamisa (a charity which supports AIDS orphans in South Africa) and the St Mary's church roof fund.

Any donations of good quality second hand books or children's toys, bottles, items for tombola, gifts and toiletries, white elephant, cakes, or plants would be gratefully received and can be brought to church or the Rectory.

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# Northchurch Notebook 'The Way we Were'

The Anchor, The Pheasant, The Compasses too -  
Now all gone from the villagers' view.  
Oh, and The Grey Mare and The Swan - at Dudswell, (I know!)  
That really was a long time ago.

But I *can* recall when part of a pub was known as 'the snug',  
A time when men took home beer for their wife - in a jug!  
No real food then in a pub but arrowroot biscuits could be bought,  
The pub was for drinking, food at home should be sought.

So my thoughts are still with the village I knew,  
Many businesses gone, some original buildings too.  
One such was Arabella Weedon's - who can recall that?  
Off Licence and Wardrobe Dealer - supplying a drink, a coat or a hat!

No cans of beer, in a bottle, the drink -  
On returning the bottle, a refund of a penny, I think.  
The Bargain Bottle eventually took over, was there for a time.  
Nearby The Post Office which I recalled in an earlier rhyme.

So will you journey on to look at the Northchurch I knew -  
Some old buildings altered for businesses new -  
'Len Cook's' the butchers and slaughter house, 'days of old' -  
Now café - and catering for airline customers I am told.

At Darrs Lane corner 'Fish and Chips' and as I write this text -  
'Window Shop' gone, I wonder what will come next?  
Then I thought for a while, what *was* there before?  
A hardware, a cake shop, a hairdressers, a greengrocers, a general store . . .

These I remember, but you, the reader, could maybe add to the list  
Of the one-time traders I could have missed.

### HEDGEHOG

P.S. Correction to last month - 'the Almshouses' were called 'the Church *House*, not the Church.



Old style fish and chip shop



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## Work Matters

Four years ago a group of Christians representing Sunnyside and Kings Road Churches had a community based meeting and recognised that there was a need to help the unemployed and those with a desire to embark upon a new career.

Martin Fillippides, who leads the team, has said 'the last course was very successful in helping those who attended so we have decided to run the programme again this year'.

The course is called Work Matters and is open to all and completely free of charge. It includes free tea and coffee, and will be facilitated by amongst others an HR Director, a Barrister and an Accountant. Content of the free course will include:

The job search – presenting yourself/networking

Your legal rights  
 Managing money  
 Starting a business  
 The person (managing stress)

And will take place at Make Believe Café on Tuesdays 17, 24 and 31 March from 7.30 - 9.30 pm.

A different aspect of the programme will be covered on each evening. We would therefore ask participants to attend all three sessions to gain full benefit from this course.

If you would benefit from or know anyone that might benefit from attending the course then you or they should contact Martin by email on [mfilippides@gmail.com](mailto:mfilippides@gmail.com) or call Mike Wallis on 07891 760244.

## Songs of Praise Sundays

The Top Ten in last year's Hymnathon gave us 10 wonderful examples of great hymns – the singing that night was a memorable outpouring of praise and worship, quite a 'mountain top' experience. So why can't we sing our favourites every week?

On the 4th Sunday of each month WE CAN!

We have over 800 hymns in our hymn book and in the last four years we have sung over 300 of them. Choosing the hymns is an interesting and challenging task with the aim of ensuring a good mix of old and new, seeking a balance between different styles of music and poetry. Our favourite hymns mould our beliefs and give us a language to express those beliefs; they kindle memories and touch our



Do you remember the Hymnathon?

emotions; they direct and reflect our spiritual journey. When choosing hymns it is important to consider how they will fit into the service. It is helpful to the worship if the words of the hymns reflect the liturgical season, the natural seasons or the readings, or even all of these. The music plays a subtle role in setting the scene, by enlivening, calming, reassuring or uplifting those who sing them. The most successful hymns are indeed a perfect

marriage of both music and verse.

Some hymns need to be long enough to allow practical activities like processing in and out or presenting collections and offerings at the altar rails; others remind us of the centrality of the Scriptures in our worship while the communion hymn can complement a period of quiet

reflection and reverence. Younger members of the congregation often enjoy hymns and songs sung in school or made familiar in their Sunday school and Youth clubs and their inclusion helps everyone feel part of the worship.

So please have a look at the hymns for the coming month displayed on the notice board in church. If we have missed one of your favourites, please write your request

and pin it to the notice board or place it in the box in the choir stalls.

The PCC welcomes your comments and suggestions about all aspects of church life including the music and worship. If you would like to make a regular commitment to choosing the hymns, please let the churchwardens know or contact Jenny directly, either in church or via the website.

Jenny Hoare: Choirmaster and Organist.

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This is **Chipolata**, she is a Jack Russell cross aged 4-5 years. She is bigger than the average Jack Russell, but we can't decide what she might be crossed with! Chipolata is an active little dog and needs a home where she will get plenty of exercise and attention. She could live with a male dog but not a cat. We think she may have lived outside in the past but she loves a cuddle and will enjoy the opportunity to curl up in front of the fire and be part of family life! She cannot live in Luton.

If you feel you could offer Chipolata, or any of our other dogs, a loving and secure home please call in at the kennels any day between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Our staff are happy to offer advice and information. Please note that we have restrictions on rehoming dogs to families with children under seven, so please ask for details.

**DATE FOR YOUR DIARY!** Join us on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March for our **Motown Party** to be held at Leighton Buzzard Football Club, Bell Close, Lake Street, Leighton Buzzard LU7 1RX from 8 pm.- midnight. Fabulous Tamla Motown sounds to make you want to dance all night! Tickets £5 available from the kennels or the football club.

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### Spring Plant Fair at Ashridge Visitor Centre, 10 May 2015, 11am to 4pm

The annual Spring Plant Fair run by the Friends of Ashridge will take place on Sunday 10th May 2015 raising funds for the National Trust at the Ashridge Estate. Come along and support this event which brings together local residents and expert private growers from the county. It is an ideal opportunity to purchase an excellent choice of quality plants for a worthy cause. Please contact The Friends of Ashridge Estate (details below) if you too can donate spare plants from your garden or if you wish to become a grower for the Spring Fair.

All donated plants from the public will raise money exclusively for the upkeep of the Ashridge Estate. This includes maintenance of the mobility vehicles and access paths, and fence repairs and improvements. The volunteer team accept any number or variety of plants - most commonly we receive perennials, grasses, and shrubs. Vegetables prove especially popular and we would like to encourage those with a greenhouse to grow things for us, for example, tomatoes, runner beans, squashes or courgettes. The trick is to get the timing right! We also would like to receive more unusual or prized plants such as peonies as the better the plant, the more we can charge! We ask that the plants are healthy and established in clean pots and come clearly



labelled including name, colour and size. It is a real bonus if the plant is in flower, but if not, a picture or photo helps to inform the purchaser of its qualities.

The Fair is run entirely by Friends of Ashridge volunteers, and is able to raise thousands in funds for essential works at Ashridge and the upkeep of the estate. Ashridge is ours to enjoy and needs to be continually nurtured with the right resources to ensure that such a beautiful, ancient site of natural woodland is preserved for future generations. Please come along and contribute to the annual Spring Plant Fair, either as a grower or purchaser, or both!

There is a lively commercial sector supporting the event with small nurseries from the local area representing all three counties in which Ashridge is situated. They will be selling unusual hardy perennials, specialist clematis, border plants, roses, herbs and more. All stall-holders kindly donate some of their proceeds to the Friends of Ashridge Estate.

To donate any plants, become a grower or to find out further information, please contact John Cartwright on 01442 864 984. Last date for plant donations is Thursday 7th May 2015. Assistance can also be provided with potting up and transportation. Please give generously.

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#### The Monday Club

March 23<sup>rd</sup> Easter Tea.

March 9<sup>th</sup> Alan Fantham will talk about the work of Northchurch Parish Council.

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**1st March** *Second Sunday in Lent*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am Parish Eucharist  
6.00pm Benefice evening prayer

**8th March** *Third Sunday in Lent*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am All-Age Worship  
6.00pm Evening Prayer

**15th March** *Mothering Sunday*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am All-Age Worship  
6.00pm Evening Prayer

**22nd March** *Fifth Sunday in Lent*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am Parish Eucharist (CW)  
6.00pm Evening Prayer

**29th March** *Palm Sunday*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
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6.00pm Evening Prayer

## Dacorum foodbank

### Priority needs for March

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### A Plea From the Editor

Getting in touch about anything to do with the Newsletter: it would be much appreciated if you could email me instead of phoning. Unfortunately I am unable to receive telephone calls because I am totally deaf and cannot hear on the phone.

PLEASE EMAIL—DON'T PHONE. THANK YOU.



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