

Small actions by us are never futile. We can change the world!

LEADER COLUMN

PETER VANNOZZI



Plenty of paper falls on all of our front door mats, I suspect. This is certainly true for me. Endless communications arrive from organisations I did not know existed. Once I do know of their existence, I am not always sure I am very interested.

Yet on the day of writing this, the latest information sheet arrived from the Diocese of London. It listed numerous events. One was new to me: Global Ceasefire Day, 21 September. Visiting a suggested website

www.peaceday.org it becomes clear what this day is about. Back in 1981 the United Nations instituted the International Day of Peace. In 2001 this was given a fixed date, 21 September, by the UN General Assembly which declared that:

...the International Day of Peace shall henceforth be observed as a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, an invitation to all nations and people to honour a cessation of hostilities for the duration of the Day...

Member states and organisations of various sorts are encouraged to mark the day in an appropriate manner through education, public awareness, and working for a cessation of all hostilities on that day.

One reaction to this is a cynical one. Does anyone, anywhere, really believe that warring factions will take the slightest notice of this? There are all sorts of worthy sounding days during the course of the year that keep people busy, and make them feel a little better.

An alternative reaction is to applaud an effort to bring issues of peace before the biggest possible audience and to make some difference. Even if only one or two people are affected then surely a life saved rather than ended is good enough?

In fact, the website lists various initiatives associated with the day, including the vaccination of 1.4 million children in Afghanistan against Polio and a wider immunisation campaign affecting 600,000 children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It so happens that 21 September is a Christian festival. Each year St. Matthew is remembered on this day. Whether or not it is right to identify Matthew the gospel writer with Matthew the tax collector and then apostle, we have a gospel that bears his name. Each of the four gospels has distinctive features, and this is certainly true of Matthew's.

Sometimes it is referred to as the most Jewish of the gospels with its frequent quotes from the Old Testament. It is seen as particularly ordered - Jesus's teaching is in five tidy sections. Matthew gives us some incidents in the life of Jesus we do not find elsewhere such as the

coming of the wise men. There is one passage of Jesus's teaching that strikes me as particularly relevant to Global Ceasefire Day:

...I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Matthew 21.35-41

This is only an extract from a longer passage, but it makes a clear point. Whatever is done or is not done for one in need is done or not done for Christ. Moving beyond a cynical reaction to this or that worthy day, if more children are vaccinated against disease because of a day such as Global Ceasefire Day, then Christ is vaccinated. If only one gun is silenced, and a life spared, Christ is spared. If there is one day when divisions between families, tribes, gangs, ethnic groups and nations are not allowed to cause more injury to people, then Christ is not injured. This is not silly naivety, but a basic underlying tenet of Christian belief and practice.

If you can, go to www.peaceday.org. The website allows you to make your own commitment for 21 September. Some may seem so limited, almost insignificant, yet it is only when someone does something that anything can ever be any different. Perhaps you will feel moved to make a commitment. If you consider yourself to be a Christian the passage above may mean a lot to you.

The site, though, is for anyone of good will and here are a few people's commitments for peace: *'I will be patient with my children and really mean it.'*

'I will help my students become more aware of the world around them.'

'I will not get angry at anyone all day.'

'I will show someone I love and care, as the world may not last that long.'

So take a second look at the paper that falls on to your mat - it can sometimes be worth it.



The monthly column of news and events from Hampton Hill and beyond.

Welcome to **Arthur Llewelyn Henry Witherow**, who attended his first service at St. James's at the age of only two weeks! Arthur's parents Glenda and Dominic were married here last year.

We were also pleased to hear of the arrival of **Abigail Sophie**, a daughter for Peter and Tracy Rawlins. Peter is the son of our former reader Don Rawlins.

Many thanks to all those who **donated tools** for developing countries following the appeal in our May issue. In addition to the many tools, we have also sent seven sewing machines, one knitting machine and three bicycles. If you still have anything, please contact Janet Nunn on 020 8979 6325.

The Diocese of London's **Lent Appeal** to build a primary school in each of its three link dioceses in Angola and Mozambique has raised at least £100,000 to date, including the Gift Aid reclaim. This will allow all three schools to be built. So well done London and thanks again to everyone who contributed to our parish total of £2100.

The **Revd. Joanna Udal**, who has been working in the Sudan for seven years and is currently in England for a few months, preached at our service on 29 June. It was good to see her again and to hear of her work there. There will be more from Joanna in a future issue of The Spire.

The **Nunn family** are having a busy year! Suzanne was married here in April and her brother Geoffrey, who regularly serves at Parish Communion, married Tiffany Henry on 19 July.

At the time of going to press, Linda and Alastair Cargill's daughter Gail and her husband Craig McLean were looking forward to celebrating a **wedding blessing** at St. James's on 26 July. Gail and Craig were married last year in Sydney, Australia, in the beautiful setting of Mackenzie Point, between Bondi and Bronte beaches.

Sunil de Mel is making slow but steady progress following his operation. Gloria thanks all those who have telephoned to enquire about him

*Do you have any news to share?
Send your contributions to Susan Horner.*

Registers

For June:

Baptism

15 Samuel Benjamin Farquhar Atkins.

Weddings

21 David Nicholas Kay and Kathleen Leonora van Rooyen.

27 Nicholas Anthony Hale and Lucinda Emma Baker.

Home from home

Celebrating the Church Hall - a thriving place for our community

Until the early 1990s St James's Church Hall was in School Road, where the Greenwood Centre stands now. The church also owned a house in St James's Road, Wayside, which had small meeting rooms downstairs and was used each Sunday by the Sunday School and for parish breakfast. We had always longed for a hall next to the church for our use and for use by the wider community.

The opportunity arose when we were able to sell the old Church Hall and Wayside to release funds to build a new hall. Led by our then vicar, Brian Leathard, the PCC commissioned the church's architect, John Deal, to draw up plans. We were fortunate to have parishioners who were professional experts in building and construction, who were able to convey our needs and constraints to the architect.

It was designed for a wide range of uses: for formal meetings, social gatherings, children's parties, and support for functions held in the church including weddings and funerals.

The plans were agreed and building started. A foundation stone was consecrated by the Bishop of London, David Hope, on 4 July 1993 and the hall was officially opened on 4 September 1994 by Vivienne Prentice, a long-standing parishioner and mother of Eila Severn.

We now have a modern hall designed to our specification, adjacent to the church and connected to it by a covered porch. The ground floor has a large function room with excellent kitchen facilities, toilets and disabled access. There is a small upper room which can be used for meetings of up to about 20 people.

Between the church building and the hall there is a pleasant paved courtyard which can be used with the hall for open-air activities. On the other side of the hall there is a small artificial lawn, which can also be used for outside activities and refreshments.

The hall is used on Sundays for Parish Breakfast and throughout the week for numerous meetings and social functions connected to the church.

Our own **Sunday School (The Jays)** meets here regularly during term time during the 0930 Parish Communion. The children come into church until the end of the first hymn and return again ready for the Communion. Children may join the Sunday School at about three years old.



Hillpark Nursery School: Amaarah and Maria playing in the sandpit in the church garden.



Yoga: it's all about balance. Not as hard as it looks!

Besides the regular school sessions, the children organise cake sales, sleepovers, etc. raising money for charity.

■ Contact: Lou Coaker-Basdel 020 8979 2040

Our **Brownies** use the hall from 1800-1900 on Tuesdays and the **Guides** follow at 1915 until 2045. Brownies are aged seven to 10 and Guides 10-14. They enjoy a variety of activities, including badge work, creative projects, off-site visits and bike rides in Bushy Park.

■ Contact: Brownies - Natasha Clifford 020 8979 0361; Guides - Charlotte Etchells 020 8941 8214

Some of the other regular users of the hall include:

Hillpark Nursery School

In September Hillpark Nursery at St James's will celebrate its 12th successful year. The nursery has a strong community feel and since opening has served over 300 local families, many of whom are members of the congregation. Some families have been with them for over a decade, two of the current children being the fourth siblings to attend.

The school has always benefited from a close relationship with parents; most of the long-serving team began as parent helpers and have gone on to complete qualifications in Early Years. The high quality of the staff and provision has been consistently praised by Ofsted.

■ Contact: Sarah Merry, Hillpark Nursery, St James's Church Hall, 020 8941 0495 (mornings, term time)

Yoga

Two classes meet in the hall, both following the works of Mr Iyenga. The Monday class, from 1900-2100, is an established group and welcomes beginners or intermediate students.

■ Contact: Marie Curbie 020 8894 0154

The Thursday class meets from 1930-2100. Teacher Sadiye Stevens says the continuous practice of yoga promotes strength, flexibility, increased mental and emotional clarity and brings each individual into closer harmony with their true nature.

■ Contact: Sadiye Stevens 079 0341 9703

The **Ash School of Theatre Arts** runs Dance Classes on Monday afternoons for children over three years old. Established for more than 30 years, the school enters children for examinations as well as performing in shows for charity. The classes hope to



The Church Hall: a thriving centre for the church and the community - not to mention the numerous birthday parties celebrated there!

improve children's confidence and creative skills, whilst at the same time making new friends.

The Monday class meets from 1600-1730.

■ Contact: Judith Ash 020 8979 7038

actfirst drama group meets on Wednesdays from 1600 to 1700. The enthusiastic five to eight-year-olds enjoy games, professional acting tuition and rehearsals for shows. In July 2008 they performed at Hampton Hill Playhouse. Actfirst also offers classes for eight to 18-year-olds and private acting tuition for LAMDA exams.

■ Contact: 020 88943053 www.actfirstdrama.co.uk.

Hampton Hill Photographic Society meets on the third Wednesday of the month from 1930 to 2200.

■ Contact: secretary@hamptonhillps.org

Special events

Some regular hirers book 'special days'. The **Bridge Group** will be holding a Bridge Drive in February 2009 in aid of Marie Curie. The **yoga** teachers sometimes have day workshops. The hall is used as a music rehearsal room (when the church is busy) and **Dragon Drama** hold workshops during the school holidays. It is also used for a wide variety of children's parties, with entertainers, bouncy castles and discos, as well as dinner parties, family celebrations of baptisms, anniversaries, birthdays and weddings. Not least the Hall is used as a **Polling Station** for local and general elections!



actfirst drama group: just who do you think you are?

We are very encouraged by the popularity of our Church Hall both for our own use and for the community. Anyone interested in using the hall should contact Kirstie Hird, the Parish Administrator on 020 8941 6003 or look at the website: www.stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk.

Rising to challenge of new job and church in ashes



Freda Evans, a former curate at St James's from 1999-2002, has just become the first female team rector in the Diocese of Birmingham, following her appointment as Vicar of St. Barnabas, Erdington and Rector of the Team Ministry which comprises two other churches, one of which is an ecumenical initiative with the Methodists.

While there is work to be done in building up the team and finding a new vicar for the ecumenical project, her biggest task will be to rebuild St. Barnabas which was virtually destroyed in an arson attack on 4 October, the Feast of St. Francis.

The cost of rebuilding is not yet known, but the insurance claim of around £5m was the largest the Ecclesiastical Insurance Company had to deal with last year.

The connection with St. Francis was



'I hope it can become a place of hope, because out of the ashes will come this wonderful phoenix'

significant to Freda because in September she had spent ten days walking on the Umbrian/Tuscan borders and unexpectedly visited a monastery in the hills above Cortona. Its tiny chapel oozed prayer.

Next to the altar was a doorway to Francis' cell where he went after being given permission by the Vatican to set up his order of friars minor and again after receiving the stigmata while praying higher up the mountain.

In addition, after her meeting with the Bishop, she had been driving home on the Aston Expressway when the words 'Rebuild my church' had come very powerfully into her mind and wouldn't go away.

She knew then that this was a task she had to do and going through the pile of paperwork later simply confirmed that, as did her visit to

the church a couple of days later. Rebuilding the church is therefore going to be a particularly spiritual experience for her.

Her induction took place on 19 June outside the building, which was clad in cream plastic. The structure of a two-storey hall at the back of the church saved the tower with its clock and its pretty peal of bells from destruction and so it was possible to be given the key to the door and to ring the bell!

The procession then made its way down the hill to the Church Primary School for the rest of the service. Freda said: 'We are always reminding people that we are the church, not the building, so this was a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate it.'

'However, everyday plans are difficult with no fixed abode! Our office, weekday services and groups are now based in the local Baptist

Chapel whose Minister and worshipping community have offered exceptional hospitality. On Sundays, the first service is there and the main one takes place at the school where baptisms are also planned, with the aid of my magnificent large bowl and ewer. I don't suppose the babies will mind being christened in a utensil generally used for washing Maundy Thursday's feet!

During the last six months, while still at her last parish, Freda had meetings with the architect and planning group to consider how the church could best serve the varied needs of a diverse community, but the rebuild will probably take two years.

'I've moved from one St. Barnabas to another and Barnabas was, of course, the great encourager - so I think my job description is pretty clear!'

Sixty years young: the 3rd Hampton Hill Scouts

By Sheila Lloyd

Parent and member of the 3HH Scout Group Executive Committee

It's 60 years since the 3rd Hampton Hill (St. James) Scout Group was formed by Stan Childs and George Casey. Scouting itself had been going for 40 years by then. The Group met at the Parish Church Hall on the site of the Greenwood Centre, and did things like camping, pioneering and knotting.

In those 60 years 3HH has moved with the times. We now have our own HQ (The George Stanley Hall) at Holly Road, thanks to funding from the Hampton Fuel Allotment Trust and a great deal of work by the then Group Scout Leader John Nielsen (now Life President) and his team.

Nowadays we do lots of activities unheard of in 1948, but the main concepts of offering adventure and fun remain. Despite other distractions it's never been more popular.

Membership is the highest ever: 127 boys and girls, aged between six and 14, in two Beaver Scout Colonies and two Cub Scout Packs, and a Scout Troop that is 40-strong. There are also 22 adults (leaders, assistants, helpers and Executive Members) who run the Group. 3HH has strong links with, and feeds into, an Explorer Scout Unit which currently numbers 15.

I've been involved with 3HH for eight years and seen the fantastic opportunities offered to young people by the brilliant and committed leadership team headed by Richard Moody, the Group Scout Leader.

My son, Alexander, started at six in Beavers (now run by Jane Riggs). He was able to let off steam, have fun, make friends with other children, and earn lots of badges (thoroughly living up to the Beaver Motto of 'Fun and Friends'). At eight, he went up to Cubs, now run by Wend Williamson



Don't fence us in! 3HH patrol orienteering in Kent this Easter

and Jon Holloway. He loved the competitions, like the Ian Goddard Challenge where he had to rush round Richmond Park.

It seemed quite a jump at first from cubs to scouts - for me more than him. He had not long turned ten.

It can't have been more than a couple of weeks after that, that the Friday evening challenge proved a bit more exciting than planned. They had to go out in patrols into Bushy Park and do orienteering. It was dusk and a bit chilly, so the six of them, all with their hoodies up, sauntered into Bushy Park.

'This policeman stopped us and asked what we were doing!' he told me later. Fortunately his patrol leader explained and unzipped his hoodie to show his 3HH uniform, and the PC wished them well.

Since then I've signed countless consent forms for activities including: knee-boarding (water-skiing on your knees); caving; flying; rowing; kayaking; and skating.

Lead by Paul Fitchett, Simon Riggs, Mark Hamilton and John Williamson, 3HH take part in the District and County Scout competitions, and are successful at swimming; athletics; football;

volleyball; night hikes and day prowls; cooking; and water rockets.

There's keen (but friendly) rivalry between the various Richmond upon Thames District Scout Groups, but 3HH's trophy cabinet is usually full!

3HH have two favourites: shooting and camping, and do a lot of both.

Every year Paul Fitchett and Simon Flowers run a National Smallbore Rifle Association Youth Proficiency Course. Those scouts go on to compete in local competitions. They also compete at the National Scouts Air Rifle Championships at Bisley.

Over the past few years four of our scouts have been invited to join the National Scout Shooting Squad. Two of those have gone on to join the junior Great Britain Squads, and one is a possible for the 2012 Olympics!

As for camping, this adventure starts indoors when you're six at a Beavers' Sleepover. Cubs go away for a few days, sleeping outside in a tent. Scouts go under canvas for a week come rain or shine - in the case of this year's Easter camp, six inches of snow in Kent!

By the time you're Alexander's age, 13, and you've done 50+ nights away camping, the challenges change. He's now a patrol leader.

Life in 3HH is what you make it really. You can just turn up to the weekly meetings and have a good time, or you can jump at the many other opportunities. Alexander has performed at the O2 Arena; he's had media training and been interviewed on TV about scouting; and he's in the National Scout Shooting Squad.

He'll be leaving at Christmas (and hopefully moving up to Explorers), but like so many others before him at 3HH, I think he'll be back to help, perhaps as a young leader.

I'd like to thank all the people who have worked so hard for 3HH since its inception, all of it voluntary. We're always in need of more adults to help with the Group - come and join the adventure - 3HH is the Group to join!

■ www.3hhscouts.org.uk

CATHERINE GASH



ECO-GROUP NEWS

Creationtide: prayers for a sustainable world

The presidents of Churches Together in England have called on Christians in England to dedicate their worship from 1 Sep to 4 Oct as 'Time for God's Creation'.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, one of the four presidents, said placing environmental concerns at the heart of Christian worship for a fixed time each year 'demonstrates our shared commitment' to a sustainable world.

The month of Creationtide ends on the feast of St Francis - a saint who witnessed the beauty and goodness of creation as a reflection of God's own nature.

To mark Creationtide, the London Churches Environmental Network is holding a service in St Paul's Cathedral on 16 September. And here at St James's, we welcome Ruth Lampard, chaplain and environmental advisor for the Kensington area, who will preach at the service on 14 September. Also, at the next event in the *Concern for our World* series, there will be a Sustainability Workshop: Every Action Counts, led by the borough recycling team.

To take part, come to this open PCC meeting at 7.30pm on 24 September in church.

Reuse plastic bottles

Do you use Ecover cleaning products? If so, you may be interested to know that the pharmacy in Hampton Hill High Street is offering a re-fill service. Take your empty containers to Health on the Hill, (near the Post Office), and fill up with washing-up liquid, multi-surface cleaner, toilet cleaner, fabric conditioner and laundry liquid.

Getting to church

Would you like to come to church on Sundays, but need transport? Do you drive to church and have space for extra passengers, perhaps once a month?

We already have some volunteer drivers and would like to expand on this service.

If you can help, or would like help, please telephone Liz Butler on 020 8977 4227.





YOUNG SPIRE

WITH PRILL HINCKLEY

What is It?

▪ How observant are you? The pictures below show small parts of things in the church or things at an odd angle. *What are they and where can you see them?*



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