

The first of March marks a new beginning in the Church's year as it is Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. The roots of the word Lent are lost in time but have something to do with the lengthening of the days as spring arrives. As the days become longer, we turn to the regeneration of the cold earth into springtime life. Along with this comes the Christian focus upon Easter. But for Christian people Easter begins not at Good Friday, nor indeed when Easter eggs first appear in the supermarkets, but today, Ash Wednesday.

We read in the Gospels that Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness at the beginning of his public ministry. 'Forty days' is often shorthand in the bible for a long time. In other words Jesus prepared himself for this ministry of teaching, healing, reconciling and engaging with people by looking inside himself and his relationship with God before he had the wherewithal to witness to God's generous love in the world, aware of the costs of that love. So Lent calls us also to 40 days or a long time of looking within ourselves and our relationship to God as to how we live our lives in the world. We don't need to take off into the wilderness, although that might be quite an attractive option, but we do need to take time. Centuries ago a wise priest called Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, required his brothers to undertake self-examination up to ten times a day. This examination is more like a review than an exam which we would pass or fail. And my plea would be that this Lent we undertake Ignatius's advice, although perhaps once a day might be a very good start. It really is very simple. Make time each day when sitting on the train, driving, washing up, brushing your teeth, whenever it is convenient, to reflect on the day and to ask yourself what was good and what was not so good, whom did you relate to positively and what did you learn from them. Think what do I take over from today into tomorrow that needs to change me or mould me in a different way. A reflection on the day that is passing in order that a new beginning may be made tomorrow. Such an examination, or reflection, need take only as long or as short a time as you have space for.

It was the Danish philosopher, Kierkegaard, who said 'We love life forwards but we only understand it backwards'. What he meant is that while we go on living, encountering new experiences and relationships, events and occurrences, it is only when we stop and reflect upon things that have happened that we can make sense out of them. That is what I would hope that we might do this Lent. Reflect upon our daily lives that we might also be changed by that reflection and live into tomorrow with the new life of Christ.

In the February magazine were details of all the Lent activities at St James' to which you would be most welcome.

Brian Leathard

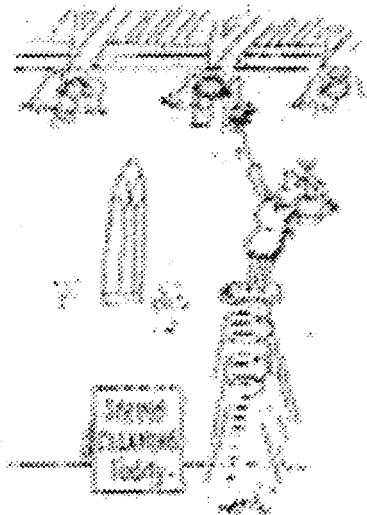
The Big Spring Clean

The annual Spring Clean of the church will take place on **Friday 31st March** and **Saturday 1st April 2006**

Our regular weekly volunteer cleaners who work, largely unobserved and unrecognised, throughout the year to keep the church clean and tidy can only do so much; so this is the time when we do all the extra jobs, get to the relatively inaccessible places and prepare the church for Easter and the coming year.

So:

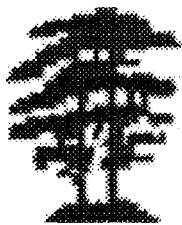
- Are you a dab hand with a duster?
- Can you sweep/vacuum clean for England, or anywhere else for that matter?
- Have you a head for heights?
- Can you clean windows like George Formby?
- How do you do with a mop and bucket?
- Can you put polish on the tiles and boards?
- Are you brazen with Brasso?
- Can you shed new light by replacing dud bulbs?
- Have you green fingers that could help tidy, weed, tend the closer parts of the churchyard?



If you can help, please step forward and let us know. Please contact Rodney Taylor (8979 0046), Liz Butler (8977 4227), or Dick Wilde (8979 8887). Let us know when you are available and what you can do. Even an hour is a help, and the more people share the cleaning work, the quicker it is done.



The Big Curry Party



3rd Hampton Hill Scouts and Guides will be joining together on Saturday 25th March to host *The Big Curry Party*, an event originally inspired by the USPG to help fund work at their Nagalapuram centre which provides people with agriculture training in a region where 80% of the population live below the poverty line. Additionally, to help secure the future of our local campsite Walton Firs we have decided to split the funds raised 50/50 and donate half to support their work.

We are still working on the format of the evening but expect a little entertainment and some extras, along with the enjoyment of knowing that your meal has been prepared, cooked, served and cleared away by 3rd Hampton Hill's finest youth.

The menu is likely to include such delicacies as poppadums and chutneys, a choice of three curries - chicken, fish or vegetarian with naan bread, at least two of which will be authentic recipes along with some other sundries and a pudding of fruit salad made with some exotic additions!

The event will take place at the Scout HQ.

Put the date in your diary **now!**

TALK!

Did you know that Hampton School holds an excellent series of lunchtime talks from September to December and February to May each year? Previous speakers include politicians Anne Overs and Ann Widdecombe, authors John le Carre and Peter Lovesey, former Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Sir John Stevens and Richard Noble, who broke the land-speed record. There have been representatives from the arts and sciences, explorers and sportsmen. Recently, there was an excellent and informative talk by broadcaster Jon Snow. Speakers scheduled for the current series include former Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality Lord Ousley and journalists David Harrison and Stephen Grey.

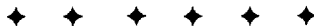
All talks are free and open to the public. They usually take place at 12.40 on a Monday or Tuesday and last for about 20 minutes, followed by questions. There is no need to book, just turn up on the day. Call in at the school office for a leaflet about forthcoming talks or ring 8979 5526 for details.

What's Your Answer

Most of us are faced with a problem taxing our consciences and our limited knowledge. Almost daily an envelope, sometimes bearing a little gift, drops through the letter-box with a heart-breaking story of some desperate emergency, urgent need, or medical under funding. Pictures of starving children, helpless families trudging through deserts or snow and selfless medical workers fighting disease challenge our compassion.

How should we react to these requests? How do we choose which of the literally dozens of mostly very good causes to support, how much of our own wealth should we give, and how should our giving be shared between the competing charities? How do we know that our giving is to be well spent?

We'd be glad for some of your answers to this problem. Letters can be given to Susan Horner or Margaret Taylor, or dropped into the church office marked 'for The Spire'.



St James's Church Hall

Our attractive church hall is under-used and yet it has splendid facilities for all kinds of occasions. We may not realise that income from bookings not only covers the costs of running it but also helps with other bills too. Could we all help our church finances by letting our friends, our schools and our associations know the hall is available for hire either for one-off events or regular usage? It is ideal for children's parties. Classes with wide-ranging activities can use it on a regular basis. Currently among others there are yoga enthusiasts and expert growers of fuchsias and pelargoniums. There is also the Upper Room for more intimate meetings and study. The hall floor was beautifully renovated last year. A new electric stove was purchased for the kitchen; also wine glasses to welcome friends at our big occasions as well as electric kettles to help supply endless cups of coffee and tea. Mugs not available yet! The side garden is beginning to look good again with its pleasant shrubs and mock lawn as spring approaches. There is also some electrical rewiring being done to make sure all our lights are operating well.

Please ask friends to enquire at the Parish Office, St James's Church, about booking vacancies and rates of hire, telephone number 8941 6003.

Betty Rainbow for Hall Committee



Make Fairtrade Your Habit

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT

6-19 March 2006

www.fairtrade.org.uk

With over 1,000 Fairtrade products available, it's easier than ever to include Fairtrade in your everyday shop and **Make Fairtrade Your Habit**

Behind all the food we eat or every piece of clothing that we wear lies a story. If we get in the habit of asking for the story before buying this tea, those bananas or that T-shirt - and choosing our purchases based on the answers - we could make our habitual choices work for others and gradually transform the way trade takes place. What is the Fairtrade story? Fairtrade creates a new way of trading that benefits small producers' groups and has a built-in commitment to their development and welfare. It guarantees producers a fair price that includes a premium for investment in social and environmental projects. This ensures that communities have the ability to fund long-term improvement.

In 2005 **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** got thousands of people involved in campaigning for more and better aid, dropping unpayable debt and trade justice. The dramatic growth in sales of Fairtrade products is sending a strong message to governments to put trade justice at the heart of trade negotiations and national policies. By buying Fairtrade you can make a difference to the lives of thousands of producers and their families, as well as showing governments you care. It's simple act with far-reaching effects, which encourages Kingdom values to come into the market place.

All WE have to do is get into some good habits in the way we buy our goods, and pass on the Fairtrade habit to as many people as we can. Let the creatures of good habits change the world. Did you know?

- Last November fair trade standards were established for cotton and from this month Marks and Spencer will be the first major high street retailer to sell men's and women's T-shirts and socks made entirely from Fairtrade cotton.
- Richmond-upon-Thames is well on the way to becoming a Fairtrade borough. The Council has passed a motion of support, serves Fairtrade products at all meetings and its website has information about the Fairtrade borough campaign: www.richmond.gov.uk/fairtrade

Fairtrade Fortnight event York House Twickenham

Thursday 16 March at 7pm

Just come along or contact Ann Peterken for more information (8891 5862)

Martyrs for March: Perpetua and Felicitas

Perpetua and Felicitas were North Africans who died at the beginning of the third century during one of Rome's periodic persecutions of Christians. Their carefully recorded deaths could stand for the unknown number whose deaths were not documented. Felicitas was a slave in advanced pregnancy. Perpetua was a wealthy and well-educated young widow with a baby. She had not yet been baptised when they were arrested with some other believers and imprisoned pending trial. Her father, who was not a Christian, visited her and pleaded with her to recant 'for none of us will speak in freedom if you should suffer anything.' She was grieved because, as she said, 'he alone of all my kindred would have no joy in my death', but she refused.

Felicitas feared she would not be allowed to die with her companions because a pregnant woman could not be executed. But after they prayed, she went into labour a month prematurely. When one of the prison officers jeered, 'If you cry out like that now, what will you do when you are thrown to the beasts?' She replied, 'Now it is I who suffer what I suffer but then Another will be in me who will suffer for me because I suffer for Him.'

It was with this confidence that the martyrs went joyfully to their death in the arena. After facing wild animals, which killed one of them and wounded the two women, they were finally executed by sword, Perpetua having to guide the inexperienced executioner's hand to her own throat.

Christian martyrdom is not just about dying for a set of beliefs - the Crusaders were not martyrs - but about accepting joyfully the sacrifices and suffering that inevitably follow commitment to the way of love, forgiveness and trust in God. The pattern of Christian martyrdom was set by Christ himself and as we meditate on his suffering during Lent it is appropriate to remember past martyrs and pray for today's victims of persecution. It is also a good time to ask hard questions about our own willingness to sacrifice, to suffer and to forgive. In the light of the martyrs' sacrifice, giving up chocolate for a few weeks may seem a less than adequate response to Christ's call to take up our cross and follow him.

*'On that scaffold, whatever God wills shall happen.
For know that we are not placed in our own power but
in that of God'. Perpetua*

Lent 2006 There will be compline on Sundays 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th March, 2ⁿ and 9th April at 9.00pm in addition to normal services. Details of Lent Groups are on the south wall of the church.



Hampton Hill Parish Magazine March 1906

My Dear Friends,

A great disappointment was felt at the Mothers' Supper, owing to the illness of Master Pat Thayer, in consequence of which the promised entertainment could not be given. However, several of our friends most kindly responded to an appeal at the last moment and a very good entertainment was provided, and I think all enjoyed themselves. The 'Lend-a-Hand' Society, under the conductorship of Mr Phillips, was a great help. I feel sure that the mothers greatly appreciate the kindness of those ladies who take so much interest in the meetings, viz: Mrs Fitz Wygram, Miss Butler, Miss Hemery and Miss Barnard.

We have recently had a most useful present for our social gathering in the shape of an excellent piano from Mr Vine Griffiths. We are most grateful for the gift.

The Confirmation will take place on Thursday, the 1st inst, at Holy Trinity Church, Twickenham. I am glad to say that we have thirty candidates.

The Meeting in connection with the British and Foreign Bible Society, on the 14th ult, was not largely attended, but the address of the deputation was excellent, and I am glad to say the collection amounted to £3.11s.0d.

The District Nurse made 261 visits during the month.

I propose to give a short course of lectures on Church History on 8th, 15th and 22nd at the Mission Room at 5 o'clock, in connection with the London Diocesan Church Reading Union. The lectures will be open to all.

Lists of the Lent Services have been printed and are now in your hands. You will notice that there will be special preachers on the Wednesday evenings. This arrangement is made in the hope that many of you will come who do not do so on ordinary occasions. I hope you will show your appreciation of the kindness of these clergymen in coming by coming to listen to them. I would also invite you to come very regularly to the Sunday Services, and when you can to some weekday Services as well. There will be extra Celebrations of the Holy Communion. It is good that during Lent we should undergo some self-denial for the discipline of our own lives and for the benefit of others. I would suggest that Foreign Missions be our object this Lent, and while I should be glad that each would select the society they wish their gifts to go to, I would suggest that 'Jerusalem and the East' should not be forgotten. Little 'self-denial' envelopes will be put in the Church porch for anyone to take who will, and these should be returned to me by April 1st.

I am, my dear Friends,

Yours very sincerely,

CHARLES R. JOB



A FEW WELL-CHOSEN NOTES



It was a pleasure to be asked by the editors of the Spire to write about my piano playing activities. Some readers will recall that a few years ago I played quite regularly in the Plantation Café at Squires' Garden Centre, mostly on Saturdays. How did this come about?

I had often listened to the pianists playing in Bentalls and wondered if I could do likewise. After all, I had played for about fifty years, but rather more serious stuff, so the old popular melodies of the twenties, thirties and so on were relatively new to me. What a wonderful musical treasure house I discovered is the process of preparing to attempt to launch myself on a new career.

Having spied a piano in the restaurant at Squires' I wended my way thither one afternoon on the pretext of partaking of a cup of tea. The manager was seated at one of the tables and so I made myself known. 'Does anyone play the piano here?', I asked. 'No', replied the manager, 'We're looking for someone'. 'Would you like me to play for you?', I volunteered. 'Are you any good?' 'Well, I'll get by until you find someone better'.

So began several years of playing there, during which time I built up quite a following among the regular customers. The enjoyment was a two-way process. I enjoyed making music and the patrons drew pleasure from my efforts, which was very satisfying. Much time was spent finding suitable tunes to play, involving trips to music shops and searching through the music library of my then place of employment.

All good things must come to an end and so after some seven or eight years I began to think that perhaps I should move on. I had some time earlier acquired a second piano at home and had them placed in the same room; hence my little notice in the February Spire. As I write this in mid-January it is too soon to see if it will bring any response, but the following tells how two-piano music came into my life.

In 1970 I joined the staff of a secondary school in Surrey. One day a new music teacher by the name of George Brown joined the staff and I suggested that we put two pianos together in one room and had a go at a joint venture. George was enthusiastic, but we soon discovered that really serious works were too demanding on our very limited practising time, so I tried my hand at writing our own arrangements. Before long the sound of our combined playing reached the ears of senior management and we were asked to provide renditions at Friday assemblies. I often wrote an arrangement on Thursday afternoon, neatly wrote out the second copy on Thursday evening (no photocopying allowed at that school!) And we would arrive early on Friday morning for a quick run through. Our spot became a regular feature and no doubt saved the headteacher the trouble of writing a suitable homily for Friday assembly.

We had a history teacher, Bob Taylor, who was also an able pianist and so for a major concert I became more ambitious and wrote an arrangement for three pianos. The music chosen was from 'White Horse Inn' and the final result was a great success, indeed, the only time a standing ovation was accorded our efforts.

Again good things came to an end. George moved to another school and then the school was faced with closure under a reorganisation of secondary education in Surrey. When it closed in 1985 I took early retirement and went off in a different direction. However, I continued to write arrangements for two pianos, much of which has never been played, which brings me to the point where the February notice originated.

Laurence Weedon



Many congratulations to Ros and Tim McDowell on the birth of their son Mark on 30th January. We have been delighted to welcome Mark to our congregation on Sundays.

The latest addition to the Sazegar family, Keanu Shahin, was baptised in January. Scarlett Lily Bunce, granddaughter of Tina and Michael, will be baptised on 5th March.

Congratulations to Pip and Anne Rowett who celebrated their Ruby Wedding on 19th February.

It is good to see Jack Gostling looking his old self after major surgery, though there are still some months of healing necessary for his full recovery. We are glad to hear that Roma Bridges is now recovering at home after her recent hospital treatment.

We were sorry to hear that Margery Orton, a very faithful member of St James' until she moved to live near her son, died on her 90th birthday. We send our love and sympathy to Peter.

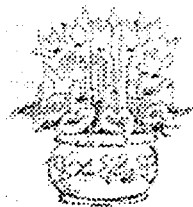
CHURCH FLOWERS

We would like to thank Greta Rosten for her reliable help with the flowers, regularly watering and tidying them during the week.

We will miss her following her move to live nearer her daughters.

We recently decided to make more use of traditional vases of

flowers which you may have noticed at Christmas, following the purchase of 5 new large vases to extend our range and variety. Vases of flowers can be easier and less time-consuming than the more formal arrangements, but still need to be cleared out and replenished each week. We desperately need more helpers! Please would you consider signing up on the rota at the back of the church to volunteer to help with the flowers occasionally? Sadly, our alternative will have to be that some weeks we will have no flowers in church. If you would like more information, please speak to either Coryn Robinson (8979 6786) or Eila Severn.



Coryn Robinson

FROM THE REGISTERS

BAPTISM

29 Keanu Shahin Sazegar

FUNERALS

5	Marian Kirby	92	
11	Clifford Raymond Baker	72	
17	Margaret Ruby Mound	93	
18	Robert Alfred John Sindall		82
23	Patricia Ann Pye	75	

BURIAL OF ASHES

23 Dec 05 Ron and Irene Piper

DATES TO NOTE IN MARCH

- 1 **Ash Wednesday**
07.00 Commuter Communion 09.15 Matins
20.00 Parish Communion with Imposition of Ashes
 - 2 Chad, Bishop of Lichfield, 672
 - 4 19.30 Concordia Voices Concert at St James's
 - 5 **Lent 1**
 - 7 Perpetua, Felicity and their companions, martyrs, 203
 - 8 Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln, 1910
15.30 Parish Tea Party
 - 12 **Lent 2**
 - 17 Patrick, bishop and missionary, patron saint of Ireland, 460
 - 19 **Lent 3**
 - 20 Joseph of Nazareth
 - 21 Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, martyr, 1556
 - 24 Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, martyr, 1980
 - 25 The Annunciation of our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary
 - 26 **Lent 4, Mothering Sunday**
 - 31 John Donne, priest and poet, 1631
- ★Friday 31st March and Saturday 1st April Church and Churchyard Spring Clean
All volunteers welcome

COPY DATE FOR APRIL MAGAZINE: 10THMARCH

The Spire will soon be published in-house and in a new format. It would be helpful if contributions could be sent electronically direct to Griselda at the Church office www.stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk

If this is not possible for you, please hand your articles to one of the editors in the usual way.