

In the new year the BBC produced a new series of the family tree programme *Who do you think you are?* Such a journey may be surprising, emotional and shocking in equal measures. For example, when the famously forthright and detached Jeremy Paxman goes in search of his maternal ancestors he finds some of the revelations affecting. It can be both strange and familiar to hear stories of a past which is remote and perhaps unknown, yet which impinges upon our present reality.

Few of us devote the time and energy to pursuing our family histories in such depth: for most of us our sense of personal identity is shaped by much more immediate circumstances and relationships. Perhaps we tell stories, look at photograph albums and imagine the people we've never met. Alan Bennett's *Untold Stories* reveals just how our family narrative can be rewritten; unpalatable truths giving way to unspoken secrets. With wit and frankness he poignantly describes how unexpectedly the story can unravel, to be retold in a fresh light. Alongside our own family stories of the ordinary and the heros stands our own life, shaped and sustained by the networks surrounding us. Our present is shaped by our memories and our hopes.

In Anthony Doerr's novel *About Grace*, fear of the future drives Mr. Winkler to flee from the present realities of his life. He sallies into an unexpected pattern of work and friendships; to reclaim the present and imagine a future he must go on a journey seeking the long hoped for resolution. There are no straightforward reversals or schmaltzy reunions, it is in the midst of painful honesty that life begins to flourish John Banville also grapples with the connection between identity and memory in his novel *The Sea*. The process of recollection for the character Max means facing trauma and loss; it entails a reconciliation with the past; it offers up the potential for life pregnant with possibilities. To live in the present means being caught up in such a process of recollection and anticipation.

Such a process does not just concern individuals and families. As a Christian community we have to know ourselves in the light of our past. That is why over coming months we'll be acquainting ourselves with some of those less well known saints commemorated in the Church's lectionary. We may find ourselves as surprised, intrigued and challenged to discover them as we are when we uncover stories and personalities from within our own families.

Remembrance has an important place in the formation of our identity as Christians. We recount our scriptural narrative in the pattern of daily prayer. Some of those stories are difficult and perplexing; others may echo something of our own struggle with faith. Our Christian story is no more straightforward than our family history. Each narrative reveals how human beings learn to live in relation to God. By reflecting on the histories, letters, poetry, visions, gospels and prophecy within

Scripture we glimpse something of the nature of God.

Remembrance lies at the heart of our worship. As we gather to celebrate the Eucharist we recall the story of God's acts of love in creation and redemption. We are connected to the source event of our faith. We receive gifts of bread and wine in the midst of our present earthly reality; we receive the gift of Christ himself that we might become his body in the world. To encounter God in the present in this way means bringing all that we are. God's story and our personal stories come together. We bring our joys and our abilities, our sorrow and failures. That is where our God meets us. In our remembering we discover the seeds of our future potential, shaped by the Spirit he has given to us.

So, who do we think that we are? We are frail human beings, carrying our own stories. But we are also members of the body of Christ. We bring all that we are to our remembrance of his life, death and resurrection that we might also be transformed. We are nourished and challenged by receiving the gift of Christ in bread and wine. By doing this in remembrance of him we form our Christian identity in our own lives and culture. We seek reconciliation in our recollections. In the present we are to imagine the future. We are to see life as being pregnant with possibilities, shaped by God. We are to keep alive a vision of better things - of justice, salvation and the common good.

Julie Gittoes

Several people have asked to see part of the text used at the parish Carol Service. St. Gregory of Nazianzus was a teacher in the early church. He was born in the year 329 and died in 389. He was one of the early teachers who said profound and powerful things in ways which are quite easy to access. A fine orator and poet he disliked public life and affairs and his attractive personality shines through much of his writing, as in this piece.

Christ is born: glorify him. Christ comes from heaven: go out to meet him. Christ descends to earth: let us be raised on high. Let all the world sing to the Lord; let heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad, for his sake who was first in heaven and then on earth. Christ is here in the flesh: let us exalt with fear and joy - with fear, because of our sins; with joy, because of the hope that he brings us.

Once more the darkness is dispersed; once more the light is created. Let the people that sat in the darkness of ignorance now look upon the light of knowledge. The things of old have passed away; behold, all things are made new. He who has no mother in heaven is now born without father on earth. The laws of nature are overthrown, for the upper world must be filled with citizens. He who is without flesh becomes incarnate; the Word puts on a body; the Invisible is seen; he whom no hand can touch is handled; the Timeless has a beginning; the Son of God becomes Son of Man - Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and for ever.

Light from light, the Word of the Father comes to his own image, man. For the sake of my flesh he takes flesh; for the sake of my soul he is united to a rational soul,

purifying like by like. In every way he becomes man, except for sin. O strange conjunction! The Self-existent comes into being; the Uncreated is created. He shares in the poverty of my flesh, that I may share in the riches of his Godhead.

A SAINT FOR FEBRUARY - THOMAS BRAY 1656 - 1730

Thomas Bray was the leading figure in the creation of the SPCK (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), one of the oldest publishing houses in England, and the SPG (Society for the Propagation of Gospel), the first missionary society of the Anglican Church.

Thomas was born in Shropshire, educated at Oxford and served as rector first in Warwickshire and then in St Botolph-without-Aldgate, London. As a parish priest he was shocked by the widespread ignorance of the Christian faith and wrote a manual of guidance for confirmation candidates. It sold well and attracted the attention of the Bishop of London and the Colonies, who invited Thomas to visit Maryland as his representative. Thomas accepted on condition that funds were raised to supply the colonial clergy with theological books. He had discovered that only the poorest clergy were prepared to go abroad and he knew how their ministry would be hampered by not being able to buy necessary books.

While his departure was delayed by legal problems, Thomas raised funds to provide libraries for Maryland and, seeing the same need at home, for every deanery in England and Wales. Of the sum finally raised, a third came from his own pocket. In 1698, together with four lay friends, he set up the SPCK to distribute religious literature at home and abroad, and also to promote charity schools for the education of the poor.

In 1699 he visited Maryland briefly and in 1701 founded the SPG with the specific aim of providing Anglican clergy to care for the colonists in America. It was not until 1710 that the society accepted his belief that it should also concern itself with the conversion of non-Christian subjects in British territories.

Throughout his life and into old age, Thomas was involved in many other good works, including schemes to improve the condition of prisoners and to provide work for the unemployed. At the same time he was an active and efficient parish priest. He even found time to write more books. Yet when he died in 1730 he had received scant recognition and today he is virtually forgotten. The selfless dedication of his life suggests he would not have minded such oversight. His main concern was that good should be done, not that he should be credited with doing it. Fervent Protestant though he was, Thomas would have appreciated the sentiments expressed in the prayer of Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits: *Teach me, good Lord, to serve thee as thou deservest - to give and not to count the cost, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for any reward save that of knowing that I do thy will.*

LENT 2006

Ash Wednesday 1st March

07.00 Commuter Communion
09.15 Morning Prayer
20.00 Parish Communion with Imposition of Ashes

Sundays 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th March
and 9th April

There will be compline at 9.00pm

We shall be having Lent Groups meeting to study the book entitled *Lent with Luke*. Copies of the book will be made available at cost price. If you are interested in joining a group please sign up on the list on the south wall of the church. We hope that there will be groups meeting during the day as well as in the evening.

Why not commit yourself to the discipline of attending one of the weekday services at St James' during Lent? Come to Morning Prayer, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 9.15am or Holy Communion on Tuesday at 9.30 or Holy Communion on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.00am (guaranteed to take not more than 20 minutes) or on the first Thursday of each month at 2.00pm followed by a cup of tea.

THE ORGAN CHAMBER

As regular attenders at church will have seen during the past few weeks, we are experiencing some problems with the interior brickwork of the organ chamber. It appears that some of the brickwork facing the organ is crumbling and in order to discover the scale of the problem and to rectify it we have needed to remove some of the organ pipes. This means that the front part of the north aisle is currently unavailable for public use. Please do not disturb the organ pipes which are laid out in particular order in the north aisle. While attending to this problem we also discovered a section of heating pipe lagged with cracking asbestos and of course this needs to be dealt with rapidly by a specialist asbestos removal firm. This may necessitate the church being inaccessible for a few days but we will attempt to give full warning of this as far in advance as we possibly can. Do please bear with us while we attend to these two structural issues. If you have any queries please address them to Brian or the churchwardens.

CHARITIES AND OVERSEAS LINKS

2005 DONATIONS

The parochial Church Council (PCC) at St James has, for many years adopted the policy of good stewardship of its resources. We believe it is right to donate to charitable purposes 10% of all the income we receive. This is based upon the words of Jesus: "*Whatever you do for the least of one of these members of my family you do also for me*" (Matthew 25:40).

The PCC would like to inform members of our parish just where this 10% of our income has been spent in the past year. We hope it also encourages individual members of the parish to think very carefully about the stewardship of their own resources and appropriate levels of giving.

LOCAL GIVING (sub-total of £3894)

Welcare in Richmond	£1244
A Christian Charity working with parents and young children in need, to achieve a better quality of life for family members.	
Hampton Hill Play Centre	£ 250
A drop-in centre for children under 5 with their parents or carers.	
Bishop Wand School	£ 250
Our local Church of England secondary school	
Clergy Emergency Fund	£ 450
Used at discretion of our vicar and curate for immediate relief in the provision of small items, such as food, clothing and travel costs.	
CARA	£ 750
A London based church project that offers spiritual care and a community of friendship to all affected by Aids and HIV.	
The Upper Room	£ 600
A community project in Hammersmith founded on the Christian imperative to love and support our vulnerable neighbours.	
St Michael's Community Renewal Project	£ 350
A vital part of the mission of the church in Camden Town, making a world of difference to those who are helped and those who volunteer.	

NATIONAL GIVING (sub-total of £1000)

Church Urban Fund	£ 500
Helping to answer the needs of impoverished urban communities.	
Church Army	£ 500
Church Army evangelists share the Christian faith through words and service and equip others to do the same.	

OVERSEAS GIVING (sub-total of £4950)

Church Mission Society	£1000
Works with churches and other agencies in over 30 countries and supports about 150 mission partners, including our link partner in Khartoum, Sudan - The Revd. Joanna Udal.	
USPG (United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel)	£1750
Works in partnership with churches in more than 50 countries, exchanging people, resources and training. Our donation helps to support two projects in Tanzania: (1) St Luke's mission hospital at Milo in the remote S W highlands; (2) Angela Mullens, a teacher at Holy Cross Secondary School near Muheza in the northeast.	
SAMS (South American Mission Society)	£ 500
Works in partnership with the Churches of the Anglican Communion in South America, Spain and Portugal.	
Vila Maninga	£ 400
A community in western Mozambique with homes for children and the elderly, a primary school, a farm, adult literacy and vocational training.	
ALMA Catechist	£ 250
A fund operated by the London Diocese for training lay catechists (a similar role to our lay readers) in Angola and Mozambique.	
The Rainbow Fund for South Africa	£ 400
A Richmond based charity that helps to meet teacher costs at the Rainbow School in Guguletu township outside Cape Town.	
Disability and Development Partners (formerly Jaipur Limb)	£ 400
Helping the disabled poor in the developing world	
Christian Aid's Christmas Appeal	£ 250
To help families returning home to Angola to rebuild their lives.	

The grand total of £9844 is our giving from parish income in 2005

Special collections during the year raised a lot of additional money: £22,785 for Christian Aid's Tsunami Appeal, £3,863 for the Diocese of London's Lent Appeal, £537 for the Upper Room, £120 for the football team at Holy Cross school in Tanzania and £152 for the Children's Society.

Many parishioners help with street collections in Christian Aid Week each May. St James raised £3492 in 2005 from collecting and other giving.

Thank you for your contributions to our giving and please do remember all these agencies of care, mission and service in your prayers, your stewardship and your daily living in 2006.

Solution to the Ecclesiastical Sudoku in the December *Spire*,
with apologies for lateness!

12	175	4	3	1	10	7	40	5
10	3	5	7	40	12	175	1	4
40	1	7	5	175	4	10	3	12
1	4	12	175	5	40	3	10	7
3	10	40	12	4	7	5	175	1
5	7	175	10	3	1	12	4	40
7	12	1	4	10	175	40	5	3
175	40	3	1	12	5	4	7	10
4	5	10	40	7	3	1	12	175

*The Mulberry Centre will form part of our charitable giving this year:
here is a brief summary of its work and purpose:*

One in three of us will be affected by the diagnosis of cancer during our lifetime. The Mulberry Centre provides somewhere to turn to, to ask questions, to sit quietly and read, or to talk through your experience with someone. The Centre is open to anyone regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or religious beliefs and offers access to an information library and to the internet. Sessions of counselling, aromatherapy, massage, reflexology, relaxation, meditation, t'ai chi and yoga are available. In addition the Centre provides advocacy support and advice on welfare rights. The Mulberry Centre is also the venue for a number of support group meetings.

We all know how it feels to worry. Being diagnosed with cancer can be a very frightening experience for the individual concerned and for those who love and care for them. The Mulberry Centre takes a holistic view of cancer care and focuses on living with cancer, helping to alleviate any unnecessary concerns connected with diagnosis. The Centre is situated in a purpose-built, peaceful and attractive building at the back of the West Middlesex Hospital campus. It has counselling and therapy rooms, a large meeting room, a library with Internet access, and a large open area where users and visitors can sit, talk, have coffee, or just be quiet.

The director and full-time staff are supported by more than forty volunteers and also by the Friends of The Mulberry Centre. The Mulberry Centre is open Monday to Friday from 10.00am to 4.00pm; the second Saturday of each month from 10.00am to 1.00pm; and the first and third Thursday of each month from 10.00am to 8.00pm.

P.S. One of their ways of raising money is to collect foreign coins, of any currency, and age (even if superceded by the Euro). There is a jar for your coins at the back of the church.

Rodney Taylor

Council of Christians and Jews (Staines and District Branch)

**Rev. Dr. Steve Nolan, Chaplain of the Princess Alice Hospice
REFLECTS UPON
LIFE AND DEATH
AS HE DESCRIBES SPIRITUAL AND OTHER ASPECTS
OF THE HOSPICE'S WORK**

**8.00pm on Thursday 16th February 2006 at Staines Synagogue
Westbrook Road, South Street, Staines
REFRESHMENTS AFTERWARDS**

Admission Free, donations towards CCJ Funds would be appreciated



We send our very best wishes to Greta Rosten as she settles down in her new home in Ringwood, Hampshire, where both her daughters live. Her address is: 81b Hightown Road, Ringwood, Hants BH24 1NH.

Dorothy Edmonds has moved to a care home in Kingston, where we hope she will be happy. She will be much missed after her years of regular attendance on Sunday mornings at 9.30am.

Bill Robinson, our one-time churchwarden of many years standing, is hoping to move into a nursing home near Virginia Water.

On a lighter note, Laurence Weedon, a member of our '8am' has sent us a note saying is there anyone among our musically gifted readers of the *Spire* who might care to join me to play some two piano music? Nothing too serious or too difficult; just for private amusement. Laurence Weedon 8979 4682. Many of us will remember with pleasure hearing Laurence play at Squire's or at Bentalls and anyone who accepts his invitation should enjoy the experience.

We send our sympathy to Joan Sindall and her family on the death of Bob her husband. We remember the Newman family which has also suffered bereavement and our Sunday School leader Lou Coker whose father died recently.

Our friends Ruth Mills and Judith Winstanley marked their civil partnership at Richmond Registry Office in January and many of us enjoyed a splendid celebratory party. We wish them happiness.

Anousha is now several weeks into her long journey round the world. We hope to bring more news about her travels in later *Spires*.

Margery Orton, whom many will recall with affection has now moved to a nursing home in Harwell, suffering from the effects of a severe stroke. Her son Peter says that she remembers Hampton Hill, but no names; he asks that if you want to send a message to Margery, do so through him and he will then take the card to the nursing home and talk to his mother about you, helping her to remember her life among us. The address is: Peter Orton, 7 High Street, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 0BP.

ARCHIVIST NEEDED

We have kept a fairly full archive of church communications, particularly the *Spire* magazine since St James' was begun in 1863. Alongside this we have a variety of photographic material and other mementos. We are looking for someone who may be interested in continuing to develop and oversee this small archive. If you are interested then please speak to the clergy or churchwardens.

St James' Church, St James's Road, Hampton Hill. The Church Hall and its Upstairs Room are available for hire. It provides a bright and attractive venue (with kitchen facilities) for all occasions and the Upstairs Room for smaller events. Ideal for dance, yoga, keep fit classes, children's parties, music and discussion groups. There are afternoon and evening slots available for regular or occasional use. Please apply to David Taylor (020 8979 3961) for information on availability and rates of hire.

FROM THE REGISTERS

BAPTISM

18 Emilia Grace Rawstorne, Hampton Hill

WEDDINGS

10 Stuart Richardson and Sarah Haunson

24 Simon Riggs and Jane Louise Riggs

FUNERALS

15 Audrey Viola Bowman 80

21 Edna May Howard, Hampton Hill 82

23 Esme Florence Hooper, Hampton 86

DATES TO NOTE FOR FEBRUARY

5 4th Sunday before Lent

12 3rd Sunday before Lent

6.00pm Wedding vows ceebration. Joint couples from our community and those married at St James' in celebrating their love for each other in a brief service followed by a glass of bubbly!

14 Cyril and Methodias, missionary valentine martyr, 269

15 Thomas Bray, priest and founder of The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge and The Society of the Propagation of the Gospel, 1730.

17 Janani Luwum, Archbishop of Uganda and martyr, 1977

19 2nd Sunday before Lent

26 Sunday next before Lent

27 George Herbert, priest and poet, 1633

20.00 PCC

28 Shrove Tuesday