

In Touch

ISSUE 2 2007
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ALL NIGHT EASTER VIGIL

By Pat Donald



HIMALAYAN ADVENTURE

By James Howes



TOLERANCE INTERNATIONAL

Sir Kenneth Dover writes

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WEDDINGS, FAMILY PORTRAITS AND
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In Touch is the parish magazine of the parish of St Thomas of Canterbury, Woodford Green, Essex (Served by the Order of Friars Minor). The parish includes Chigwell Convent Mass Centre & a Mass Centre at St Stephen's Church, Albert Road, Buckhurst Hill.

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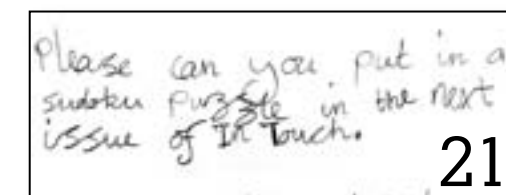
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An all-night Easter vigil

By Pat Donald



I had long heard that the Easter Vigil at the Church of St Charles Borromeo in Ogle Street, W1, was an all-night affair with the full liturgy and baptisms taking place in the walk-in baptismal font. This year I decided to attend.

The vigil began at midnight, and, anxious to make sure I had a seat, I arrived very early. I was immediately struck by the heady perfume, which came from the many flowers on the large square altar and windowsills. In front of this altar was the open baptismal pool in a cruciform shape. It is unusual to see a deep font like this in Catholic churches although there is one not far from us, in the shape of a womb, in the Church of Our Lady & St George in Walthamstow. The seats were not arranged in the usual pattern facing the altar but down the sides and across the end of the church, in effect encompassing both altar and font.

At 11.30 pm, full lights were put on and a buzz of anticipation began to build up as the church filled up with people of all ages and nationalities including families with quite small children, the little girls in their best dresses. The priest Fr Alan Fudge came in to check things including the temperature of the water, and musicians began to tune up their instruments. At 12 pm, we were all bidden, as we are at St Thomas', to go outside for the beginning of the Vigil, the Service of Light.

We were directed, not just outside, but a couple of streets away, Riding House Street, where the Vigil fire had been prepared in the middle of the street. (A taxi which put its nose into the end of the street was obliged to turn back and find another way.) I noticed we were very near a house with a blue plaque saying that "Olaudah Equiano, the African" had lived there. As it happened, I had just seen the film "Amazing Grace" which included the freed slave Equiano who worked with William Wilberforce for the abolition of the slave trade. Perhaps the precise spot was not entirely a matter of chance although it was not explicitly referred to. In any case it struck me as remarkably appropriate since we were about to celebrate the escape of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt as well as the delivery of us all from the slavery of sin. As we walked back in procession to the church, we were accompanied by exotic rhythmic music on guitars and tambourines and strong male voices singing a song about the escape of the Israelites from Egypt.

Once back in the darkened church with our candles taking the light from the Easter Candle, the Exsultat with guitar accompaniment was sung by the whole congregation, with powerful effect. There followed the Liturgy of



Infant baptisms at the Vigil. Adults too are submerged



the Word, which since we had all night, included all seven of the Old Testament readings. The Responsorial Psalms to each reading were led by different singer-guitarists, all excellent, and we in the congregation joined in by singing and clapping during the chorus. After the third reading about the Exodus from Egypt, the roof rang with "Horse and rider he has thrown into the sea."

It was interesting to hear the readings, which are rarely chosen when only three are required. From the fourth reading, Isaiah 54, I heard afresh the marriage theme as a metaphor of the Lord's relationship with his people, "Does a man cast off the wife of his youth? says your God." The sixth reading from Baruch was followed by a very Jewish-sounding song with the Hebrew words, "Shema, Israel, Adonai Eloheinu", ("Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God"). Again, the music was lively and people seemed used to joining in. They were also ready to respond to the priest's invitation to share their thoughts and reactions to the readings. After that the children, who were probably beginning to wilt, had their chance to participate. They grouped together to sing a song based on the question asked by a child at every Passover supper, namely, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" "Every other night" they sang, "we go to bed early and don't stay up, but this night....." The very special time of Easter night was in this way underlined for them by

the fact that they, some not much more than 6 years old, were being allowed to stay up so late.

After the altar candles were lit and the Gloria sung, the priest sang the Gospel to soft guitar accompaniment and did the same with the Blessing of Water. The centre of the action had now moved to the baptismal pool and the parents of three babies took their seats along one side of the pool. On this occasion, evidently, there were no adult baptisms. The full pre-baptismal rites, the sign of the cross and anointing on the chest took place, and then each baby, Tomasz, Deborah and Julio, was plunged into the water three times as the words of baptism were spoken. After the third immersion, each was held aloft, (needless to say, crying), and the chorus of "Horse and rider", the song of liberation was again sung to celebrate that they had passed through the waters of death into a new life of true freedom with Christ. Afterwards, both priest and babies (whose crying stopped remarkably quickly) retired briefly, he to change out of his wet vestments and into a fresh set, and the babies to be clothed in white. He then

In front of this altar was the open baptismal pool in a cruciform shape. It is unusual to see a deep font like this in Catholic churches

administered the post-baptismal rites of anointing the head with chrism and lighting their baptismal candles.

The Vigil now moved into the final phase, the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The priest sang the words of consecration over the large loaves of bread and the wine before breaking the bread and dividing it up ready for distribution. We remained in our places for Communion, which was received in both kinds.

After such a lively liturgy, how was it to end? Again, the Jewish roots of our faith were drawn on, since the night ended with the whole congregation joining in a dance. Holding hands we sedately moved round the altar and pool (luckily no-one fell in) singing "It would have been enough", based on a Jewish song often sung on Passover night. The idea of it is that "it would have been good enough for us if the Lord had merely taken us out of slavery in Egypt, but in fact he has done so much more; he has led us to the Promised Land, and given us other countless benefits (which are enumerated verse by verse). How thankful we should be!" The theme was extended to include the specifically Christian events we were celebrating, Our Lord's resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit. The music was lively and rhythmic and enormous fun, altogether a fitting and joyous end to the Vigil. By this time, it was 5.30 in the morning. As we left the church it was apparently still dark, but it must have been on the cusp of dawn because by the time I had driven home it was light. I had time for just a couple of hours' sleep before getting up and ready to play at the 10 o'clock Mass of Easter Day.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



In this issue we are delighted to report a considerable increase in parishioners offering letters and articles, particularly from the younger generation. You will notice the substantial increase in coloured pages and photographs. Our last issue which first introduced colour was a great success. We were sold out by the first weekend after Easter and then miraculously a small pile of returned copies appeared at the back of the church where we found the occasional £2:00 coin lying beside it.

Many important events have occurred in Church and state matters around the world. Pope Benedict XVI made his first long journey from the Vatican to the largest Catholic country in the world, Brazil. Surprisingly, until now Brazil has not had a single canonised saint. It got its very first Saint on May 11th during the pope's visit to São Paulo, the Franciscan friar, Frei Galvão. An interesting comparison with this apparent dearth of worthy persons in Brazil is the intention, in October, to beatify, the first step toward canonisation, no less than 500 Spaniards, all Civil War martyrs of which 469 are, unusually, lay church members killed by republicans or anarchists because of their religious convictions.

Two bishops are reported, even in The Tablet, to have said that MPs supporting abortion are forbidden from 'taking' Holy Communion. Of course, they said no such thing. Nobody 'takes' Holy Communion; each of us presents ourselves at the altar to 'receive' Holy Communion. Therein lies the essence of what the bishops said. In conscience we present ourselves to receive the ultimate gift and no one presenting him self or her self at the altar, having examined their conscience may be refused the sacrament.

Simultaneously, well almost, with the restoration of power sharing on 8 May in Northern Ireland, Tony Blair finally promised on 10th May to vacate No10 on the 27th June, no doubt hoping that his success in Northern Ireland would outweigh the public's 'Bush puppet' image over the Iraq war. Meanwhile, back at the coalface, Gordon Brown has planned to prepare for his premiership by reading the final Harry Potter book, which is available from the 21st June giving him six days before his 'coronation' to search for the wizardry he may well need to put Labour back into power at the next General Election. Don't laugh; Gordon has spotted that the Harry Potter brand has become one of the largest UK exports, a considerable achievement for a single mum working out of a greasy spoon café. My guess is that one of Gordon's first acts will be to have JK Rowlands ennobled. Dame JK, you heard it first here.

Massive media coverage has been given to the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Falklands War, which made not a jot of difference to the world map, apart from getting Margaret Thatcher re-elected, whilst the 40th anniversary of the six-day war, Israel versus three Arab states, which reshaped not only the Middle East but arguably also the world, got only a slight media whimper.

LEON MENZIES Editor

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HELLO AND GOODBYE



We were very sad to lose Angelina Marr as our in-house cartoonist/illustrator and even more so when we spotted a trademark Angelina cartoon in the local Guardian newspaper. The cartoon was so obviously Angelina's work that we were drawn to the story. Angelina was having a go at London Transport for disturbing her sleep and work whilst they worked late into the night to improve Woodford Station. The cartoon tells it all.

But as they say in the world of positive thinkers, when one door closes another shuts. I think I got that right! Within a week of advertising for an aspiring cartoonist Ben Grand was on our doorstep, father of Jessica Burke who is currently attending the Journey of Faith and will be received at Easter next year. Ben was asked to provide a photograph and a little autobiography. Requesting a photograph from a cartoonist is probably the greatest insult the naïve team at IT could have made. We got what we rightly deserved a caricature, which is reproduced here. We are all looking forward to a very exciting time with Ben. He has led a very exciting life and is full of good stories many of which will no doubt find their way into the pages of In Touch in the future. For now, here is a little background.

IN TOUCH 2007 ISSUE 2

I was born in Malaya (as it was then called), into the warmth of a comfortable Victorian colonial family. From the day I could first properly hold a pencil in my hand I wanted to be an artist when I grew up. Mum and Dad hoped it was simply a childhood thing, a passing phase that I would grow out of, and had every expectation and wish that I would find a "respectable" career. Thoughts of a Van Gogh or Toulouse Lautrec in the family were almost too much to bear. The older I got, the more nervous they became. Things got serious in my final year at school, St Francis Xavier Institution. Dad did his best, and eventually persuaded me that being an artist was not a proper job for a Jewish boy.

I found, to my parents' chagrin, that anything to do with the medical profession was definitely out. I did try, but could not prevent myself from literally collapsing into a dead faint at the sight of blood, even the merest trickle. I think they were finally convinced when, after I had completed performing a vivisection on a frog in class, the full horror of what I had done caused it to happen again, but this time I ended up severely concussed on the stone floor.

At about this time, I entered a competition in "The Straits Times" for a strip cartoon, and won it. Since it was the premier national newspaper of Malaysia, my parents reluctantly conceded that perhaps I did have some artistic talent. After further heated negotiation, (becoming an artist was still not on the agenda), a desperate but inspired proposal was put to me. I was to study Architecture!!!

Well, I did, and did quite well too, breaking my course to do National Service in J.A.R.I.C., the Air Intelligence Service of The Royal Air Force.

Studies completed, work, marriage and kids followed in fairly reasonable order. I still have a wonderful wife, fabulous children and now grandchildren. I was, and still consider myself to be a very lucky man. My career as an architect was progressive, varied, interesting and fortunately successful. Most of our work was for major projects of different types. These were carried out by our medium-sized practice of about thirty architects, plus management and support staff. Any architectural organization of this size relies heavily on repeat business from its various clients, and repeat commissions only come from satisfied clients. Thus for me, as my role in the office progressed, the practice of the Art of Architecture was dramatically tempered by client politics, office considerations and a host of other matters totally unrelated to the core function of designing and constructing buildings. Although retired, I still am called in by various organizations for consultancy advice.

What a reversal of roles takes place on retirement!!! Instead of making decisions and giving orders as Senior Partner to the Practice, I am now mainly given orders from all my family, including my very young grandchildren ...and I love it!!!

Why did I accept the post as artist to this journal when it was kindly offered to me? Well, a long time ago, a young man who wanted to be an artist did actually get a strip cartoon published in The Straits Times! At last my ambition is to be fulfilled.



Summer eating



Some favourite recipes using seasonal ingredients and ideas for lighter meals.

Tomato sauce

25g butter or 1 Tbsp oil

1 onion – finely chopped

1 clove garlic – crushed

1 400g can chopped tomatoes

2 tbsp sun dried tomato paste or tomato puree

Seasoning

Pinch sugar

1 Tbsp fresh basil – torn

1 Heat butter or oil in saucepan and cook onion and garlic until soft – not coloured – 10 mins.

2 Add tomatoes and cook until reduced slightly.

3 Add tomato paste/puree and seasoning and sugar. Cook over gentle heat for 20 minutes. Add basil to taste.

4 If smooth sauce is preferred place sauce in a blender or processor.

Serve sauce with pasta or gnocchi, vegetables or meat/poultry

TIP This sauce freezes well. Freeze any left over basil in a plastic container and use direct from freezer when required – do not thaw

Barbecue Sauce

1 large onion – finely chopped

1 clove garlic – crushed

2 Tbsp oil

1 small can tomato puree

2 tbsp lemon juice

2 tbsp soft dark brown sugar

150ml beef stock

2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce

2 tsp dry mustard

Seasoning

1 Heat oil – cook onion and garlic until soft, add remaining ingredients, stir round.

2 Cover and cook 15 – 20 minutes stirring occasionally. Cool.

Use this sauce as a marinade for any meats prior to barbecuing and for basting whilst being cooked or as a cook-in sauce for chicken pieces or pork.

TIP The sauce freezes well.

Roasted Vegetables Serves 4–6

1 medium aubergine

2 courgettes

1 red pepper

1 yellow pepper

2 small red onions

1 fennel bulb

2 fat cloves garlic – finely chopped

4 tbsp olive oil

Seasoning

2 tbsp chopped basil

25g pine nuts – toasted

Dressing – if used

2 tsp balsamic vinegar

2tbsp olive oil

1 Cut aubergines, courgettes and peppers into 2.5cm cubes.

2 Place in a colander and sprinkle with 2 tsp salt – leave 30 minutes.

3 Cut peppers into 2.5cm squares once deseeded and cored, peel and cut onion into wedges.

4 Cut fennel into quarters, core and dice.

5 Rinse aubergine and courgette well to remove salt and dry on kitchen paper.

6 Place all prepared vegetables in a bowl and add the oil, toss well.

7 Place in a large roasting tin in a single layer, if necessary use two tins.

8 Roast 230 Mk8 for 40 min stirring from time to time to ensure even

browning.

9 Once cooked, season with salt and pepper add basil and pine nuts.

Serve warm with crusty bread as a light meal or as a vegetable accompaniment.

TIP This dish can be eaten hot or cold – if eating cold add dressing whilst still hot.

Mayonnaise

2 medium egg yolks

2 tsp lemon juice or white wine vinegar

1 tsp Dijon mustard

200ml sunflower oil

100ml light olive oil

Seasoning

Summer Herb mayonnaise

Recipe above

2 tbsp each freshly chopped parsley and chives

Lemon juice

Black pepper

1 Put the egg yolks, lemon juice or vinegar and the mustard into a bowl. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

2 Whisk with a balloon - whisk until pale and creamy; this will take around 5 min.

3 Put both vinegars into a jug, then, whisking all the time, pour into the egg mixture drip by drip at first, then in a steady stream. Don't add it too quickly or the mayonnaise will curdle. Continue until all the oil is incorporated and you have a creamy mayonnaise.

4 If necessary, thin the mayonnaise with a little cold water and check seasoning.

5 Store in a screw top jar in the fridge for up to 3 days.

Serve with poached salmon or roast chicken, new potatoes and salad.

TIP All the ingredients should be at room temperature before you begin

– if they are too cold or warm the mayonnaise could curdle. If the mixture curdles you can rescue it by adding 1 tsp cold water and mixing well. If this doesn't work, put another egg yolk into a clean bowl, then add the curdled mixture little by little and whisk in after each addition to make a thick emulsion.

Summer Berry Pavlova Serves 6–8

4 egg whites

250g caster sugar

1 tbsp corn flour

2 tsp vinegar

1 tsp vanilla extract

275ml double cream or mascarpone or crème fraiche, or mixture of each

1 tsp vanilla extract

450g mixed fruit e.g. strawberries, raspberries, blueberries etc

1 Draw a 25cm circle on a piece of baking parchment and place on a baking sheet.

2 Whisk egg whites until very stiff, using an electric whisk or a balloon whisk. If using an electric whisk gradually build the speed up – a minute at speed 1, then speed 2 and so on.

3 When egg whites are stiff, add the sugar, a tbsp at a time whisking all the time.

4 Once all the sugar is added the mixture should be stiff and shiny; add the cornflour, vinegar and vanilla extract and whisk in.

5 Spread mixture on to parchment circle making a slight dip in centre.

6 Bake in centre of the oven Mk2 150c for an hour. After the hour switch the oven off but leave the pavlova in the oven until cold.

7 Mix cream mixture with the vanilla extract and spread over the pavlova

8 Top with fruit and serve

TIP Pavlovas freeze well but never harden so should be stored carefully. Store for up to a week in an air tight container

■ The bowl and whisk should be grease-free otherwise the whites will not whisk.

■ The egg whites should be at room temperature for best results.

temperature for best results.

■ The cornflour, vinegar and vanilla give this pavlova the marshmallow texture

■ The Lemon Tart recipe uses the 4 egg yolks you have left.

Eton Mess Serves 6–8

175g caster sugar

3 egg whites

450g fresh strawberries – hulled

570ml double cream

1 tsp vanilla extract

1 tbsp icing sugar

1 Make meringues using egg whites and caster sugar as in method for pavlova

2 Once sugar is added place rounded spoonfuls of mixture on to baking parchment on a baking sheet.

3 Bake 150c Mk 2 for an hour. Switch oven off and leave meringues in oven – overnight if possible so they dry out.

4 Chop half the strawberries and place in a blender or processor with the icing sugar until pureed.

5 Chop remaining strawberries and whip the cream until floppy and not too stiff.

6 To make up the pudding; break the meringues into 2.5cm pieces, place them in a large mixing bowl, add the chopped strawberries, then fold the cream in and around them, gently fold in the puree.

7 Pile the mixture into a serving dish, spoon the remainder of the puree over the surface and serve as soon as possible

TIP Make the meringues the day before you want to serve the pudding – meringues freeze well so could be made when you have egg whites over.

Lemon Tart Serves 6

1 – 20cm sweet pastry flan case baked blind.

2 large eggs

4 egg yolks

180g caster sugar

200ml double cream

2 large lemons

Icing sugar to dust

Mary Knights FOOD PAGES

Please send in any recipes of your own making that you have enjoyed. See that the quantities of ingredients are clearly stated and only send in recipes that you have tried and tested. Submissions to Mary Knights c/o the editor 72 Malvern Drive IG8 OJP email leon@racionzer.net

1 Whisk the eggs, egg yolks and sugar together until smooth and creamy add the cream and the juice of both lemons and the finely grated zest of one of the lemons.

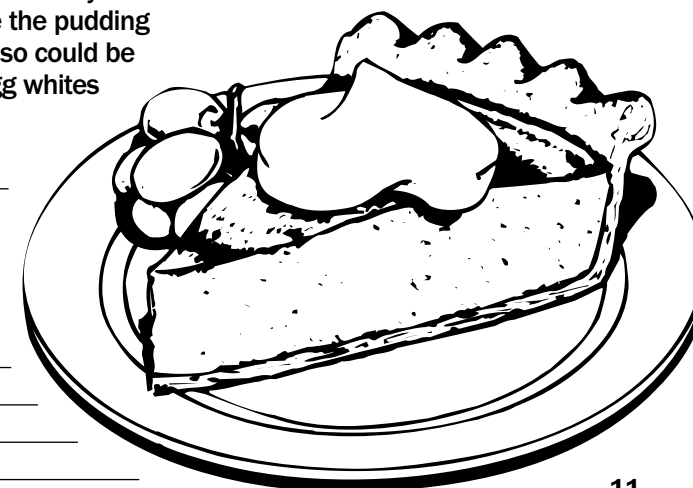
2 Strain the mixture into a jug; pour half the mixture into the baked flan case.

3 Place tin on the bottom shelf of the oven 150c Mk 2, Pull out the shelf half way, keeping the tin level and pour in the remaining lemon filling, carefully push the shelf back into the oven .

4 Bake for 45–50 min until the tart is just set. It should have a slight wobble in the centre, leave to cool.

To serve dust with icing sugar.

TIP You could glaze the top of the flan by placing under the grill or using a cooks blow torch.



My Himalayan Journal by James Howes



James Howes is the grandson of the previous editor of In Touch, Brian Howes and the older brother of our Kids Page editor, Rory Howes. (Howes that for a family business?) James is 20 years old and very much into physical fitness, not surprising for a teacher of martial arts. He also helps out in a local primary school. Recently James, in his continuing search for adventure that is physically and mentally demanding, spent time in Australia travelling up the east coast, from Melbourne to Cairns. As if that is not enough, he is currently planning to travel around the world, taking in the wonders and experiencing at first hand the plight of those in poorer nations.

The first part of his journal published here concerns

his adventure in the Himalayas to raise money for the British Heart Foundation. It all started with a piece of junk mail addressed to his mother. "I saw it and said Everest! I reckon I could do that! My mum laughed, so I decided to go through with it." James needed to raise a minimum of £3000. He is still collecting so the amount is still rising. There is no upper limit. Should you wish to donate check in with his web site www.bhf.org.uk/sponsor/jameshowes



Day 1 20.02.2007

On the 20th February 2007, wearing my British Heart Foundation [BHF] fleece as a means of recognition, I met at Heathrow (62m / 203 feet above sea level) the people I was to spend the next 16 days with. I had no idea then just how close these people would become on the arduous adventure we were to share. I was introduced to the person I was to share a tent with, Jon Tighe, a BHF representative, tanker-driver from Plymouth and ex-soldier, I then said goodbye to my Mum and moved on to the departure lounge where I met more of the intrepid trekkers to be; a pharmacist, optometrist and doctor. A number were from Scotland, one originating from Ireland.



Day 2 21.02.2007

It was 6:00 local time on the 21st when our flight landed at Doha on the Persian Gulf. Flying into the rising sun makes one extremely, jet lagged; it certainly knocked me for six. Here we had a three-hour wait in the airport before catching the next plane to Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. A three and a half hour flight moved us on five and a half hours due to time zones, and into an amazing culture shock. Now at 1,300 metres, 4,265 feet this was the first leap of a continual upward climb into the sky. Future leaps will be more like crawls as the means of transport changes from jet power to piston engine and finally, the toughest of all, on foot. But that knowledge is with the benefit of hindsight. Right now what is ahead remains a keenly awaited mystery.

The fifteen-minute drive from the airport to the Hotel, with the Lai Wreath given to us at the airport still round our necks, was a journey to remember. There was no doubt that, by observing the architecture and the heaps of rubbish everywhere, we had moved from an opulent Arab Muslim city, Doha, to a third world Buddhist city.

Car horns sounded everywhere;



one could hardly guess that the loud hooting and free-for-all driving practices, were in fact supposed to be driving on the left. Bicycles in their dozens were piled high with everything you could imagine; cooking pots, televisions, household goods of all sorts dangled down over the rear wheels or protruded outwards and upwards making them look like moving piles of junk.

Everywhere there were scenes of poverty. Huge piles of rubbish on the roadside with bare-foot children, dogs, and even cows, rummaging in unison through it all. Looking for, God only knows what. These scenes con-

trasted dramatically with the Palace Gardens and more opulent areas that we also passed on this very brief journey to our Hotel.

The briefing session shortly after arrival in the Hotel gave some hints of the arduous journey, or should I say journeys ahead. We were well advised to get early to bed after dinner at 8 p.m. My personal time clock was already well screwed up so it mattered little that wake-up call was to be 4:30am.

Day 3 22.02.2007

Bleary eyed and only half conscious after a night of waking up every couple of hours with my head going 500mph (have I packed this? Have I packed that? Do I need to pack such and such?), I was awakened by the alarm. After repacking I made it to a hearty breakfast at 5:00am; bacon, sausages, baked beans, bread, melon; not bad at all. But was this fare to continue?

Having already drunk a litre of water since awakening, we filled up our water bottles before assembling at 6am in the Hotel reception. That fifteen-minute trip in the bus to the airport at this early hour was no different, apart from the position of the sun, than the journey in the late afternoon yesterday.

Our plane was delayed 4 hours due to bad visibility. I suppose that would not be unusual when, considering we were about to fly into the beginnings of the roof of the world, we would naturally meet a lot of cloud.

Finally we got onto the tiny twin propelled, otter plane, that seats only 16 with the entire luggage being stuffed into every available nook and cranny. The high wing meant that there was no obstruction of the view beneath and around us. The flight to Lukla was awesome. It was like a scene from an Indiana Jones film as the plane flew through the Himalayas, scraping over ridges so close you could almost



reach out and touch the treetops, dodging between saddlebacks before diving steeply into Lukla airstrip. We crunched down on the short uphill slope, which the plane uses to slow itself down, so that the pilot brings the nose up at the very last second. Oops! you can certainly feel it.

The airstrip was built by local Sherpas under the supervision of Sir Edmund Hillary in 1964. It has been extended and sealed with tarmac since then. I would not have wanted to be a passenger in one of those planes before the runway was tarmacked over. As the runway sits literally on a shelf between the Dudh Koshi valley and the Kalo Himal Mountains it is not surprising nobody flies in except in good weather and with full visibility, as there is a great mountain wall at the end of the runway. Hence the four hour delay at Khatmandu.

It took three planes to get the whole group, 37 of us, out to Lukla. Now at an altitude of 2,800 metres 9,200 feet, which is noticeable almost straightaway, nobody has to remind you to move slowly. Lukla is the last airstrip before base camp, still another week and half away on foot. From here on there are no more hotels. It is life under canvas or in the open air and all travel is on foot. This is the start of the trek that we all came for. It begins in this prosperous little town and takes us through

tiny, almost primitive villages providing yet another culture shock. At the approach to each village there is a prayer wheel, bells and frequently along the way there are tiny Buddhist shrines.

We share the track and the long rickety wire suspension bridges, straight out of Indiana Jones, some over deep ravines and others over tributary streams, with many yak/cow hybrids. The broad well-marked trail skirts fields ready for potato and buckwheat planting, forested slopes and Sherpa lodges. Vast mountains ahead and at either side of us, the views are awesome. I took so many pictures but how can one capture this



vast mountainous panorama in a tiny viewfinder?

After about an hour and a half we stopped for lunch, and then another one and a half hours walk with more of these scary wire bridges, indescribable views and many cows, chickens, horses and dogs. How surreal; at one point I was walking on sand whilst looking at snow. Finally we arrived at Toktok where many trekkers will remember the waterfall and the view of Thamserku (6808m 22,340 feet) rising majestically at what looks like the head of the valley. Here we pitched camp, rolled out our sleeping bags etc before tucking into a vegetarian dinner, which was really nice, all cooked and served by the amazing, ever-smiling Sherpas. These guys, the porters, who are looking after us are amazing. They carry 30kg plus, with straps that go round their forehead, and walk the same distance as we do but faster. They clear snow from the campsites, set up a whole site in the time (or quicker) than I can set up one tent. They're amazingly efficient; cooking the food and doing virtually everything that keeps us all going. They never cease to amaze me. I have huge respect for them all.

By 8:30pm it's time to use the toilet tent and get to sleep in order to be up for 6:00am tomorrow February 23rd.

Day 4 23.02.2007

To my own surprise I find myself up at 5:45, earlier than expected with the help of a cup of black tea, poured from a steel kettle that is just one of the many utensils the Sherpas carry or have dangling from their heavy pack. Then a quick face rinse, and breakfast, porridge, milk, honey, toast, egg and more tea followed by hot chocolate. Yeah, hot chocolate! After breakfast I had to refill my water bottles because I'd been using one as a hot water bottle at the bottom of my sleeping bag during the night. Due to a faulty seal it leaked, a whole litre of water, all over my sleeping bag and mat. Disaster! But by morning everything had miraculously dried due to my body heat.

At 8:00am we set off into wonder-



land. What can I say? We were going for a total of eight and a half hours including rests and lunch. By the way, I seem to have left my taste buds back at Kathmandu; tuna, tomatoes, jalapenos; oh well, I needed it all. We crossed huge suspension bridges over huge drops, 'just look straight ahead,' we were told, real scary stuff. Thoughts of Indiana Jones once more came into my mind. We took in amazing sights; waterfalls, cliff faces like great solid walls disappearing into the clouds and many, many yak/cow things that are now referred to as yows or caks. And yes, they too cross the suspension bridges. We faced both extremes of weather. To begin with it was hot enough for us just to wear our base layers, but as the time went on and the snow thickened underfoot we had to adorn one layer after another.

We arrive at Namche Bazaar the Sherpa capital and the gateway to the high Himalayas which is literally in the sky, 3,440 metres 11,286 feet at its lowest point. We camped in a huge cloud and I wore 4 layers (including two fleeces) and still felt a bit chilly. On account of the cloud there was nothing for us to see, but I had two duties to perform, well one really. Do you need to know that I have now used the toilet tents for both "activities"? Well, yes, you do need to know; just so that I can say that compared to the latrine tents those portacabins

that are speedily erected at open-air functions and adorn many building sites, are the height of luxury. Dinner followed, pasta, lentils, soup, and fruit and yak burgers!

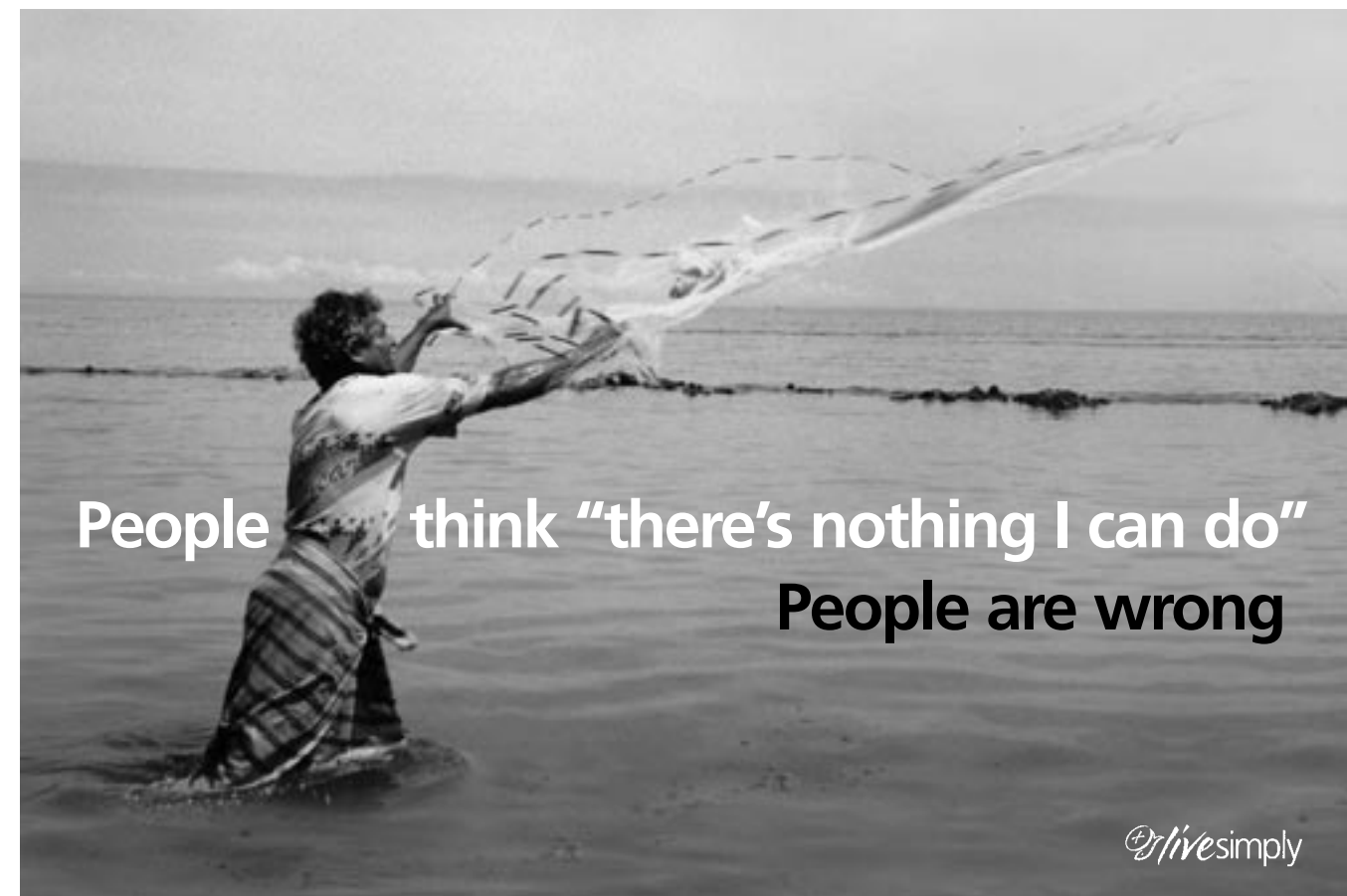
Day 5 24.02.2007

It was very cloudy last night so there was nothing to see, but this morning, day five 24th February, we were wakened, as is now the norm with tea in bed. Then I opened the tent and stuck my head out and... wow! There was an amazing mountain range view glistening with the sunlight on snow. Only now I was fully aware that Namche Bazaar, a village in the Khumba region of Nepal actually perches like an eagles nest on the side of a hill. Namche is the main trading centre for the Khumbu region, so there are many Nepalese officials, a police check-post and a bank. Near the top of the village is the headquarters for Sagarmatha National Park as well as a Nepalese army barracks.

Today was a rest day. Some rest day! Many visitors will spend a little time 'resting' here for altitude acclimatization; not yours truly. Before breakfast, already some of us had walked up to a viewpoint next to the army barracks and saw an amazing view of Everest and surrounding mountains such as Ama Dablam the twin peaked glacier. The main peak is 6,812 metres 22,349 feet, the lower western peak is 5,563 metres 18,251 ft. Ama Dablam means "Mother and Child" the highest peak represents the mother and the lower peak the cradled child and it is such a stunningly beautiful mountain that I, like many others who visit the area, considered it the best in the region. For several days, Ama Dablam dominated the eastern sky when we moved on into the Everest region.

So far I have not had space to tell you about the real hardships that start this afternoon when I find myself crawling on hands and knees to reach the highest Hotel in the world but you will have to read the next instalment for that.

James' original journal is available on www.myspace.com/jameshowes



People think "there's nothing I can do"
People are wrong

livesimply

After all, just because we can't change the world all in one go, we can still give a man a fishing net. Then he can earn a living, feed his family, and send his children to school. A fishing net here... some water pipes there... training a health worker somewhere else... there's plenty we can do to challenge poverty – but it doesn't happen overnight.

You can start right now by taking CAFOD's 99% Challenge.

Just ask yourself if you could live on 99% of your income, and think about what that other 1% could do for people living in extreme poverty. 1% or whatever you can afford, given regularly, can provide the tools to help people change their world for good.

Please take the 99% Challenge today.

Here is my monthly gift

of £_____ to challenge poverty

Please collect my Direct Debit gift on:

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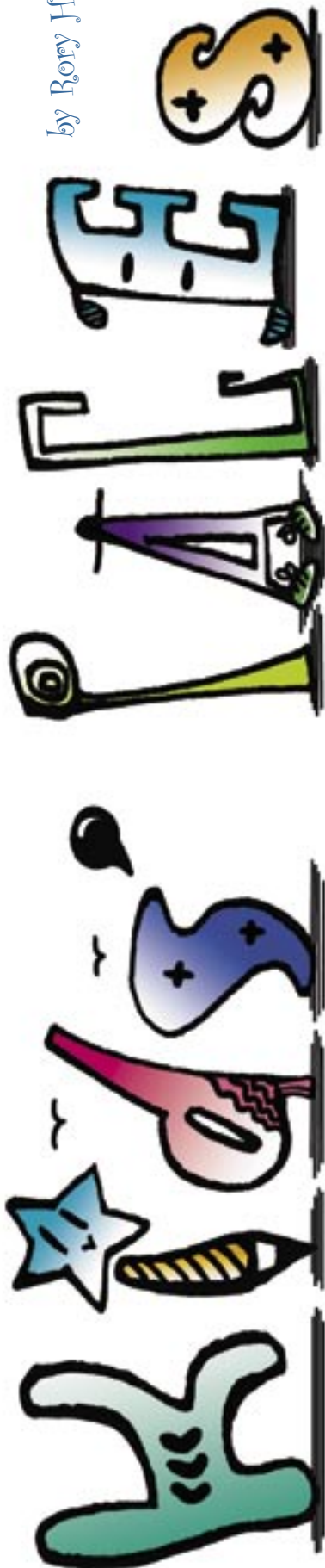
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SUDOKU

Doctor WHO

The best thing on TV at the moment is definitely Dr Who, but how much do you know about the Doctor?

The Doctor is a Time Lord, an extraterrestrial from the planet Gallifrey, who wanders time and space in an internally vast time machine called the TARDIS – Time And Relative Dimension(s) In Space. Although the TARDIS once had the ability to disguise itself according to its environment, after landing in 1950s London, its exterior became stuck in the form of a British police box because of a malfunctioning chameleon circuit. It has remained in that shape ever since.

Doctor Who

JOKE:
Why didn't the Doctor like Rose's Boyfriend?

ANSWER:
He took the Mickey!

Doctor Who

JOKE:
What is Rose's mum's favorite food?

ANSWER:
A Jackie Potatolli!

Mostly due to the age and unreliability of the TARDIS's navigation system, the Doctor explores the universe at random, using his extensive knowledge of science and technology to avert whatever crises he encounters. The Doctor generally travels with one or more companions.

Although Time Lords resemble humans, they are different. For example, like other members of his race, the Doctor has a binary vascular system (in other words, two hearts) that allows him to go without air for some while, an internal body temperature of 15-16 degrees Celsius (60 degrees Fahrenheit), and he occasionally exhibits a super-human level of stamina. But there are some things that aren't good: for example, he once claimed that a tablet of aspirin could kill him.

THE HISTORY of the PIRATES...

The third part of the Pirates of the Caribbean film came out recently and we all went to see it! It's interesting to see that piracy has been going for more than 3000 years! It appears that the word pirate (peirato) was first used in about 140 BC by the Roman historian Polybius. The Greek historian Plutarch, writing in about 100 A.D., gave the oldest clear definition of piracy. He described pirates as those who attack without legal authority not only ships, but also maritime cities. Piracy was described for the first time, among others, in Homer's The Iliad and The Odyssey. For a great many years there remained no real definition of piracy. Norse riders of the 9th and 11th century AD were not considered pirates but rather, were called "Danes" or "Vikings".

Starting in 16th century piracy was gaining in popularity as bigger and

faster ships were built. Colonial expansion was beginning with all the shipping it created carrying gold and other goods. English privateers could for instance attack and rob Spanish shipping. On the other hand North African pirates had a licence to rob English ships and Madagascar pirates of the 18th century represented the French king.

“The practice of hijacking ships or airplanes has developed into a new form of piracy”

The most famous pirates were from the Barbary Coast and these were Muslim pirates operating from the coast of North Africa. Captains commanded cruisers outfitted by wealthy backers, who then received 10% of the value of the prizes. The pirates used galleys until the 17th century when they used sailing ships. The most notable leader of North Africa was Barbarossa.



During the 17th century, the Algerian and Tunisian pirates joined forces, and by 1650 more than 30,000 of their captives were imprisoned in Algiers alone. Piratical practices were the cause of several wars between Tripolitania and the United States in the 19th century. The British made two attempts to suppress Algerian piracy after 1815, and the French finally ended it in 1830.

Buccaneers were pirates hired by their governments to fight in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714). "Buccaneer" title was applied to English, Dutch, and French sea-faring adventurers of the 17th century. The buccaneers were escaped servants, former soldiers, and wood cutters who, during the 16th and 17th centuries, preyed mainly on Spanish commerce with the Spanish American colonies.

Quite a few pirates were operating during the Elizabethan years when England and Spain fought over world domination. One of the famous pirates was Sir Francis Drake who circumnavigated the Earth, during which Spanish shipping was looted, Spanish California plundered even though England was not officially at war with Spain.

The regular administration of most islands and land areas of the world, and the general recognition by governments of piracy as an international offence resulted in a great decline in piracy in the 19th and 20th centuries. Piracy has, however, occurred in the 20th century in traditional places like the South China Sea, and the practice of hijacking ships or airplanes has developed into a new form of piracy.

JACK SPARROW QUOTES...

CAPTAIN JACK: MY SHIP. THAT MAKES ME CAPTAIN!
CAPTAIN BARBOSSA: BUT I HAVE THE CHARTS!
CAPTAIN JACK: THAT MAKES YOU CHART-MAN!

CAPTAIN JACK: WHY SHOULD I SAIL WITH ANY OF YOU? FOUR OF YOU HAVE TRIED TO KILL ME IN THE PAST. ONE OF YOU SUCCEEDED!

CAPTAIN JACK: WHY IS THE RUM GONE?
ELIZABETH SWANN: ONE BECAUSE IT IS A VILE DRINK THAT TURNS EVEN THE MOST RESPECTABLE MAN INTO COMPLETE SCOUNDRELS TWO. THAT SIGNAL FIRE IS OVER A THOUSAND FEET HIGH. THE ENTIRE ROYAL NAVY IS OUT THERE LOOKING FOR ME. DO YOU REALLY THINK THERE IS EVEN THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE THEY WON'T SEE IT?

CAPTAIN JACK: BUT WHY IS THE RUM GONE?



Chronicle of Parish Events

By PA Nache

Oh What A Night! ...

St George's night was a roaring success. Again! 128 people arrived to a DJ, face paints and cold buffet. Some people mentioned the lack of pie and mash but were easily satisfied with the many treats we had on offer. All hands on deck before. During the afternoon even Leon got stuck in helping with the cheese and pineapple! Caroline provided an excellent quiz, which nearly led to a fight between the contestants not mentioning any names. However, the lady concerned seemed to think it was another saint's night??

The raffle raised an extraordinary £157, which together with last years total will make a generous donation to a local charity to be decided by the Becket Centre Social Group [BCSG] at our next meeting.

The children enjoyed singing to the latest hits on the DJ's mike. Their main enjoyment was simply being with all their friends and family on a LATE night out. Our success was blatantly obvious when we had to hint to our guests that it was time they all went home. Had the DJ not turned on the lights and gone home they might have remained all night.

Thanks to all who came along and made it a great occasion and thanks to all those who worked so hard to make it happen.

The next event to be organised by the BCSG will be the Parish picnic on 15th July 2007 - so put it in your diaries now and be sure to tell the family.

Strangers into Citizens campaign

Bank Holiday Monday 7th May, George Bush winked at the Queen during her state visit to Washington. Tony Blair was notably absent from Westminster, (perhaps sipping a glass of champagne at the prospect of celebrating the one success of his premiership, the devolution of power to Stormont the following day) as thousands paraded past a heavily guarded entrance to Downing Street in pouring rain on their demonstration walk from Westminster Cathedral to Trafalgar Square.

The Cathedral was packed to overflowing as an estimated 3,000 people attended the mass celebrated by Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor, Archbishop Kevin McDonald of Southwark and our own Bishop Thomas McMahon of Brentwood, the three dioceses that cover the Greater London Metropolitan area in which 350,000 migrant workers of many faiths (and none) find an insecure resting place from the perils of their homelands that caused them to flee to this

England.

Only a day after local elections up and down the country at which 15% of candidates fielded were from the British National Party, it was refreshing to hear Archbishop Kevin say in his homily, 'And so it is that in the Church, a key role of ethnic chaplaincies and of Catholic parishes is both to integrate new ethnic groups into the already existing community and also to create space to explore and celebrate ethnic diversity, culturally and liturgically... We seek to dialogue with members of other religions, trying to identify and explore in a positive way the values we hold in common. And we reach out to all people of good will, and all of this contributes significantly to social cohesion and peace in the world.'

As the congregation filed out of the cathedral they converged with a long snaking line of other demonstrators beating tom-toms, blowing whistles and generally making a lot of noise that caused one to forget the continuing weeping skies. Ah yes, this England!

Every so often, one spotted another

Woodfordian from St Thomas' some of whom filed in behind the St Thomas of Canterbury banner and then disappeared again in the confusion of banners and umbrellas.

A dozen speakers gave two minute talks from the podium in Trafalgar Square, most notably and succinctly the Catholic Peer Baroness (Shirley) Williams of Crosby. She asked, what would you want these people to do? Starve to death or steal to live? For without legal permission to work for years on end they are exposed to unscrupulous employers who knowing their illegal status pay less than the minimum wage and when they complain they are exposed to the authorities and deported.' The cause organised by Strangers into Citizens is to have a once only amnesty for all migrants who have been in Britain for more than four years, making them legal citizens of the United Kingdom and thus relieving them from the suffering of existing on the edge, in a state of legal limbo, and helping the UK economy by turning them into UK taxpayers that all of them would welcome.

Father Brian's three-line whip on all parishioners exiting the church after the masses in the weeks prior to the event seemed to have worked very well but as we did not travel as a group we have no idea whether or not there were 100 Woodfordians present.

The concern for asylum seekers spans the religious, cultural and ethnic mix in the UK. Over the second May bank holiday 25-28th, two young Jewish men, a freelance speech writer and a barrister, went back to migrant status when they travelled from Sighthill estate Glasgow - where many refugees end up - to London using only what is available to asylum seekers. The Jewish Human Rights movement René Cassin initiated the project in order to highlight the difficulties faced by asylum seekers who are often moved a long distance from

the capital where aid and contacts are often based. The journey took three days including many hours standing by the roadside hitchhiking lifts. There was a time when hitchhikers especially the young had little difficulty getting a lift but in modern times hitchhikers, justifiably, are viewed with suspicion.

St George's Day parades:

It is usually the case that the Scouts, Guides, Brownies and Cubs parade together on the nearest Sunday to St George's Day (23rd April).

In this centenary year of scouting, however, Guides paraded separately on Sunday 22nd April for a very good reason. Our Scout group, the 43rd Epping Forest South Group, played host to 520 members of the Scout Association from the whole of the Epping Forest District. See the special report on 100 years of scouting on page 30.



Two special events occurred at the guide's parade and church service. The Division Commissioner, Angela Walters, presented the 30-year bar to Janet Morris (above) recognising her thirty years service as a guide leader. Eighteen years of these have been in our St Thomas' parish group. If it weren't that disclosing her age would be a breach of the Data Protection Act I would tell you how old she was 30 years ago when she first became a leader. Janet joined the Brownies at seven years of age in Highams Park with Joy Gailer, one of our parishioners, as Brown Owl and later as her

Guide leader. Janet first became a leader at Highams Park and her husband, Gerard, became a scout leader there. Who said Scouts and Guides don't mix?

Also Linda Simpsole (right) received her ten-year bar as a leader, all of these years in St Thomas' group which now has a roster of 40 guides and a waiting list.

Interestingly both Janet and Linda were received into our community through the Journey of Faith although Janet was already leading the guides before her reception into the church.

Elsewhere in this issue we refer to hitchhikers (see page 24) these two mothers can be by no means classified as such. They both show that dedication to a parish activity is possible in addition to working and bringing up children. Tolerant husbands are, of course, a necessity.

St Stephen's to St James 1970 - 2007 By Margaret Hayes

It was with mixed feelings that the congregation of 120 at Buckhurst Hill left St Stephen's church for the last time where they had been attending Mass for the past 37 years, (before which they had worshipped at the health clinic in Buckhurst Way).

We have shared many celebrations over the years, from Baptisms and First Communion to special birthdays, Silver and Golden Weddings to less joyous occasions. However, for several reasons it had been decided that it was no longer possible for us to remain at St Stephen's. As we had been offered a home at the St James



URC in Palmerston Road, we reluctantly made the move up the hill.

Our last Mass at St Stephen's was celebrated on Easter Sunday. After the celebration led by Fr

Danny, it was 'all hands on deck' to gather our candles, hymn books, albs, collection plates, children's liturgy equipment etc, and transport them up to St James'.

On our first morning we were met by senior members of the United Reform Church and some members of the congregation. They attended Mass with us making us feel very welcome.

Afterwards we were invited to join them for a cup of tea before their service at 10.30.

As we need to start 'from scratch' each week, everybody has to play their part in getting ready for Mass: at present we are muddling along together, learning what's kept where and which key unlocks which door, but things will settle down shortly. As always we are looking for people to help out with the many jobs that need to be done, in particular we are looking for help with the children's liturgy, also for sacristans and altar servers; training will be given. If there is anyone available who is musical and can help us out with singing, playing an instrument etc. and would like to worship at Buckhurst Hill, please let us know. You will be very welcome to join this lively and friendly community.

Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers whilst we start on a new journey together looking forward to the future whilst remembering and valuing our past.

Thanks to all those who have contributed to the celebration of the Mass and have helped build our community over all these many years.

Our special thanks must go to Peter and Joan Hayes who have unfailingly unlocked the door at St

Continued overleaf

Chronicle of Parish Events continued



Stephen's every Sunday for the last 37 years and to Don and Mary Copping, who's inspiration, enthusiasm and generosity of spirit, have been vital factors in shaping our precious community. There have been many others too who would certainly merit mention here were it not for the lack of space.

the Ascension. A few of these masses - held in RE lessons during the week - were given by Father Jeba, of the Parish of St. John Vianney, Clayhall. Unlike your average mass, Father Jeba approached it from a very different perspective.

His Homily related to each of us as individuals, asking us to consider what God would say about us, and by feeding us ideas and rhetorical questions - he left us to think for ourselves along the guidelines he gave. Without inflicting the embarrassment of sharing our thoughts with our peers, we were given the chance to be totally honest with ourselves, about who we are, and whether we are content with this image. An interesting and engrossing approach that I have never previously experienced.

As an alternative to just reciting the mass - he proceeded to explain what each part of the mass meant, and the backgrounds behind the prayers. By the end of the mass, I was suddenly aware of many meanings behind the words we hear so often; Prayers of confession in every mass; Profession of the Catholic faith; Thoughts for those who have gone before us; and a prayer for Peace and unity.

Contemplating these thoughts on my walk home from school, it occurred to me how very little I had truly understood in all the years I have attended mass. I wonder how long I would have gone on thinking there was little more to them than general prayer and Eucharistic administration had it not been for Father Jeba's unique and thought provoking words.

Mass That Made me Think. By Sukie Whitehall

Pupils attending Trinity Catholic High school began the month of May with a Mass in memory of



SEASONAL PICTURE

Philip Racionzer sent in this picture for this summer issue with the caption

My assistant gardener. Taking care of the fiddly jobs!

Please send your favourite seasonal or topical picture to the editor.



DISCOVERING JESUS

by Katherine Stevens aged 12

I stepped into the cool dark church
And gazed along the pews,
I felt my heart begin to lurch
And my soul felt renewed.

My walking feet would not disturb
The serene atmosphere,
I suddenly stopped dead in my tracks
The presence of God was here.

I knelt before the wooden cross
And clasped my hands to pray,
When I'd finished I felt an enormous loss
Had left my soul that day.

I came back the next day and the next
Found the altar, found the font.
I found a book, read the text
'Bible' it said on the front.

I sat there, reading, hours I'd spend
Turning the wafer thin pages,
I turned the last page and got to the end
I'd been sitting there for ages.

My thoughts were whirring around in my brain
I couldn't believe what I'd read!
This miracle-maker, this King of Kings!
His name was Jesus it said.

Katherine is a reader at the 11:30 mass.

LETTERS

Please send your letters to The Editor, Idvies, 72 Malvern Drive, Woodford Green, IG8 OJP or email leon@racionzer.net

To the Editor, In Touch magazine A. MASOUD – NORTH LONDON

Dear Sir, I read with much interest your article entitled "Global conflict Myth or reality"

I must say it was very heart warming to see that the issue that we Iranians have felt brewing up in the past three decade is now finally coming to light in peace loving communities in the west. As a Moslem and as some one who has lived in Britain for nearly 2 decades and has acquired British nationality, I feel that the biggest contribution that I can make to the country in which I sought sanctuary is to alert them as to the grave consequences of adopting the wrong policy towards those who use the name and the power of Islam for their sinister purposes. I felt your article very much addressed that and pointed to the heart of what could prompt the next potential world conflict.

Many of us remember the Iranian revolution to get rid of a dictator with all the enthusiasm that surrounded it. This became a nightmare in which people were stripped of their livelihood, dignity and liberties; you reflect this in your article. To many in the Moslem world, however, the Iranian revolution remained a beacon of hope and righteousness, they never realised what we went through after the initial period. That's why we see today the same pattern repeating itself and some people in the Moslem world falling for the message of the extremists. The reason: it looks as if they stand up for the oppressed, where as in reality they are dictators.

I believe this issue answers the question posed in the headline of your article, Global conflict is not a myth far from it. It is a potential reality and that's why more needs to be said about it and more people need to participate to stop it from

starting. I, and many in my community who have read your article, commend your effort for bringing this very important issue to light and setting it up for debate.

History has shown us that the only way to contest extremism under the guise of religion be it Christianity, Islam or Judaism is to use the core values of these religions and to take ownership of the message of peace and tolerance that they brought to man kind. Following your suggestion and I signed the petition on www.toleranceinternational.org.uk This petition initiates a platform for all people in Britain to celebrate the dignity of tolerance as opposed to violence.

Extremism and violence are not part of any religion and that's why, when it is portrayed in that vein, people of faith have a greater responsibility to address it, that's why I wrote to thank you for taking that initiative.

May the Good Lord Bless your efforts



Don't take our beautiful church for granted LOUIS MACPHERSON

Having spent ten months in hospital, my main desire was to come back to church for Mass. My daughter, Angela, came down from Peterborough for the day on my first Sunday at home. Arriving at 9.45 a.m. she was just in time to push me to the 10 o'clock Mass.

When I entered the church, my breath was taken away. I had forgotten how beautiful our church is and how crowded it is for Sunday Mass. I was pushed to the front by Saint Francis' altar. I did not realise how emotional I was when the Gloria was

sung. I could not sing without crying. My abiding memory of that day is of a beautiful church and a wonderful Mass and meeting up again with old friends. Please do not take all this for granted. We are so lucky to be so well served.

There were only two things that marred my first day back. Everyone was in such a hurry to leave the church that no one would make way for the wheelchair. Then a car was parked across the slope to the High Road and Angela had to heave the wheelchair across the flowerbed to get out. Judging by the appearance of that piece of garden I suspect this must be a regular occurrence.

Travelling afar for Good News WALTER POULTER.

Dear Editor,
On a recent visit to a distant land my wife and I wandered up to the Church for a vigil Mass on Saturday evening. The church architecture was similar to the Catholic cathedral in Liverpool, on a very much smaller scale. The altar was dressed for the Confirmation service scheduled for that Sunday.

We were surprised to see a familiar face from Woodford kneeling in a nearby bench. At the homily the priest introduced the visiting speaker to enlighten us about the work of the Fatima mission in Zimbabwe. Sister Elizabeth (our parish assistant) spoke out about the suffering of the population and how the mission spread the Good News and brought succour to the hungry and sick.

During her talk the candle stand on a side altar caught fire but she was not distracted and we left better informed that a little of our money goes a lot further with those who have nothing.

When my father converted to Catholicism, one of his reasons was consistency at whichever church you attended. The newsletter in this distant land announced that there would be a vigil Mass for the Ascension on Wednesday evening, a school Mass on Thursday morning and an evening Mass.

Returning to our home country

MORE LETTERS OVERLEAF ►

LETTERS

Continued

we noticed no additional activity as the feast day has been moved to Sunday.

Where were we? Cupar in Scotland. Only the Bishop's Conference of England and Wales has moved the celebration of the Ascension to the nearest Sunday. Elsewhere the feast is celebrated forty days after Easter, therefore. There has been considerable objection in the Catholic press to the apparent downgrading of this the third of the four most solemn of feasts of the liturgical calendar; equally rated with the Passion, Easter and Pentecost.

A request

FROM ROBERT YIANNAKOU AGED 7,

Dear Mr Menzies

Please can you put in a Sudoku puzzle in the next issue of In Touch.

I like Sudoku and so does my dad.

Thank you.

See page 16

In praise of In Touch

FROM MARY LYNCH

Dear Editor,

Thank you for another excellent production of In Touch, which educates, informs, entertains and keeps us truly In Touch. It is most gratefully appreciated. I pray you will continue to edit it for many years to come. The article on The Holy Family Sisters in the last issue and the recollection of Lourdes by Frank Fitzpatrick were particularly interesting. I recall particularly the constant rocking of the train carriages on the long journey to the Pyrenees over 50 years ago. It is so much easier to travel now. .



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Prof. Abdou Filali-Ansary: Director of the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations

Richard Rampton QC: Leading British libel lawyer

Mohamed Sarwar MP: The first British-Pakistani MP

Dr. Richard Stone: President founder of Alif Aleph UK, Jewish-Muslim forum, Chair of Commission of British Muslims and Islamophobia.

Rafiq Abdulla MBE: Chairman of the Trustees of the Festival of Muslim Cultures

Dr. Mohamed Fahim: Learned Imam, South Woodford mosque

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R.S.V.P.: To register and for more information go to www.toleranceinternational.org.uk/7thJuly or call 0207 427 0050

Tolerance International -UK is a company Ltd reg. in England No. 03999579. Reg. charity No. 1082759. Reg. office 2-b Cannon St., London EC4A 6YH

In the last issue of In Touch I wrote an article on the situation in Iran and referred to Tolerance International. Many parishioners went into the web site and signed the petition. The following letter has been sent to all those who have signed the petition or donated to the work of Tolerance International. It is from Sir Kenneth Dover FRSE FBA, Emeritus Chancellor of the University of St Andrews from 1981 until his retirement in December 2005 who is the Honorary President of Tolerance International.

Dear Mr Menzies

You will remember me writing to you last year about the important work of Tolerance International -UK. I am very grateful for your sympathy and support for this very important cause.

Tolerance International -UK aims to address extremism wherever it occurs, whether in the name of "Islam", under the influence of the "Christian Right" or in the name of 'Zionism'. Tolerance International -UK seeks to draw on the reserves of tolerance, liberty and equality which are fundamental principles within all religions and spiritual beliefs, to contest extremism. Our aim is to try and prevent incidents like the 7th of July. As part of this campaign we are having a meeting which I would appreciate very much if you could attend. An invitation for you is enclosed.

With regard to Iran, the fanatics in power in Tehran see the intelligentsia inside the country as their biggest enemy. They realize that it is only such

people who have the ability to hold back the expansion of Islamic fanaticism so vigorously fostered by them. It is for this reason that President Ahmadinejad has vowed to use all his power and influence to secure the extradition of 4,000 dissidents who are the remainder of the Iranian intelligentsia residing in Ashraf camp in Iraq, some 60 miles from the Iranian border.

A special Fatwa (a formal Islamic verdict like that issued in the case of Salman Rushdie) has been issued for the execution of these 4,000 victims. A similar Fatwa led to the massacre of 30,000 like-minded people in just two weeks as reported by the Sunday Telegraph on February 4, 2001.

The situation in Ashraf needs immediate attention. These people need urgent support, especially as their legal status has not yet been established. Tolerance International-UK is sponsoring this very urgent case to help prevent a catastrophe.

Like the Rwandan situation the only effective thing standing

between these innocent people and the fanatical regime ruling in Iran is the International community.

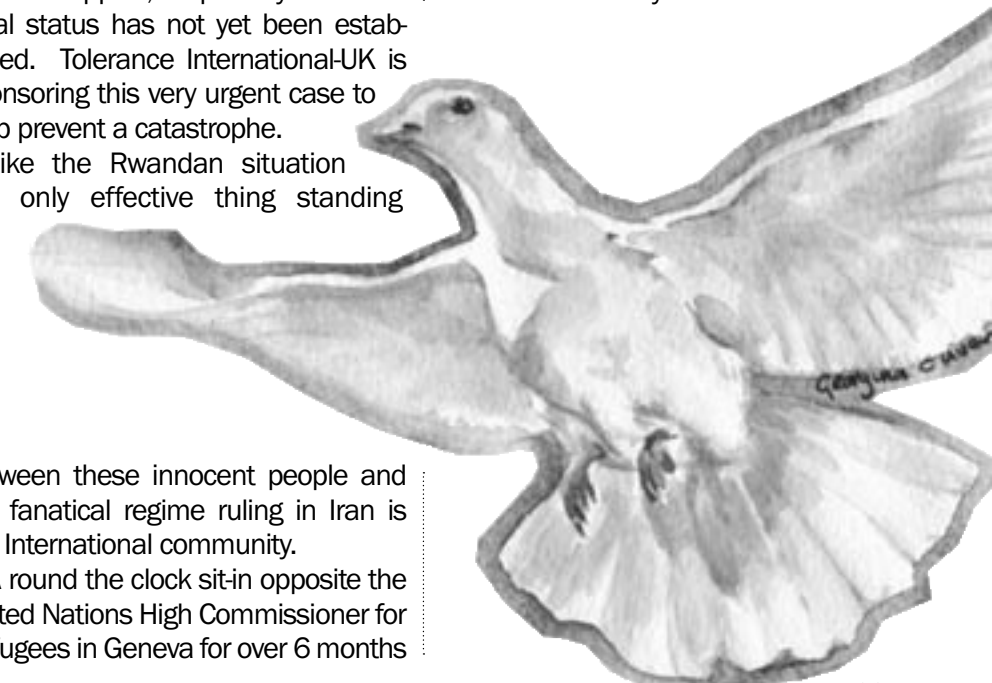
A round the clock sit-in opposite the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva for over 6 months

managed to get some result but the situation is very dangerous for these refugees. Our collective efforts, both on the legal and the awareness fronts, have helped highlight the plight of these people. This has helped the situation to a great extent, but we need urgent assistance to continue.

Your support could help us save lives. I am sure like many others you also wished that the international community had intervened in the Rwandan situation before the massacres took place.

We have the chance of stopping a possible massacre of innocent, law-abiding people, whose only "crime" has been to oppose the Iranian regime. Please help us now to save these innocent people.

Yours Sincerely Sir Kenneth Dover



THE HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE PARISH

By Paul Duvin

Step 1 Preparing for the Journey

Make sure you register your existence and address with the parish office. Without this all subsequent contact you make with the parish may be viewed with suspicion.

Step 2 Getting Noticed

No one picks up a hitchhiker if they can't be seen. Make sure you have a ready smile and introduce yourself to the priests after attending Mass. Timing is all-important – to beat him out of church once in an emergency may be excused but to leave only your skid marks at the door repeatedly is rather like hitching from the wrong side of the road.

Step 3 Timing of the Thumb

The clergy are especially busy in the autumn of every year since this is when applications to our excellent schools are made and each applicant needs a reference. If you have left the above two steps until the autumn you are far too late. The church at this time is more crowded, there are more confused people not knowing when to sit, stand or kneel and the responses seem to give them a problem. Could those swelling the mass attendance be hitchhikers?

Step 4 How to move your Thumb

All gestures can be misinterpreted so rather than offending potential traffic the way to send out a proper signal is as follows. Depending on the age range of your children you can volunteer to assist in the running of the sacramental programmes, children's liturgy, reading or acting as a steward. Of course the timing by the parish for such appeals is crucial. A previous PP made the mistake of asking people to stand down to make way for new volunteers. The Becket Centre was packed with willing helpers, rosters were filled and everyone had high expectations, only to be disappointed by the attendance rate the week after school places were allocated. I am sure there was no connection; just a strange coincidence.

Prompted by a recent comparison Fr Isidore made to the congregation at the 10am Mass I thought that serious consideration should be given to a guide for parishioners. Hitchhikers reach their destination at the expense and effort of others whom they have never met

Step 6 Decide your Destination

If you wish to hitch a lift at no expense and effort to you, think carefully. Once your child is at a parish school, the school too will want your co-operation, support and commitment as the teachers struggle to educate your child and inculcate Christian values that will sustain them in an ever increasingly secular world. They will expect you to participate fully in all school activities and not only bring your child to the parish Garden Fete for the country dancing display that bolsters the attendance and makes the event a worthwhile social success but also to help with the administration of a host of other school events.

Step 7 Save Time and Effort.

Volunteer now and stick with it. You will enjoy being part of the community and gain much from it. But if all else fails or is just too much bother, having a visible display in your home of the last four issues of In Touch when you receive a visit will help. There will be details in the next issue of where to hire such a set if you have not acquired your own copies.

before. We were told that there were many of them amongst us.

Although the Church provides us all, individually, with a spiritual home to take us to the eternal promise, it could not do so if it were not a community into which we are all initiated through baptism. I can fully appreciate that parish priests can feel frustrated by a seeming lack of response; Fr Isidore was referring to the need for volunteers to organise the Garden Fete which is an annual feature of the parish calendar. By publication date we will know how successful his method of appeal and the clemency of the British Summer weather has been. But there are many other benefits that parishioners seek from the parish, not least admission to Catholic schools.

Step 5 Getting a Lift

Joining a parish organisation, the CWL or SVP, or the parish council are ideal. However, there are serious drawbacks for a hitchhiker. Both of the former groups are filled with committed individuals who work tirelessly over many decades on behalf of others. A hitchhiker joining these organisations would be counter-productive. If on the other hand you join the parish council you may be viewed with a degree of scepticism but the once monthly meetings with a break during the summer holidays is very much less demanding than helping out at Garden fete time, church cleaning, weekly money counting etc. and as the PP attends council meetings you are sure to be noticed.

Easier options for getting noticed include allowing your children to roam during the sermon. It can sometimes provide light relief but it is guaranteed to distract the priest. If you believe that any publicity is good publicity, this could be an easy option.



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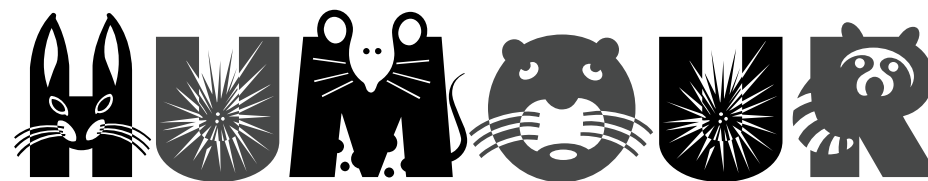
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By Jo King

Who said men and woman were made equal?

A man said to his wife one day, "I don't know how you can be so stupid and so beautiful all at the same time. The wife responded, "Allow me to explain. God made me beautiful so you would be attracted to me and he made me stupid so I would be attracted to you!"

But don't be fooled. Women were not really created stupid; they just like men to think they are.

A man and his wife were having some problems at home and were giving each other the silent treatment. Suddenly, the man realized that the next day, he would need his wife to wake him at 5:00am for an early morning business flight.

Not wanting to be the first to break the silence (and LOSE), he wrote on a piece of paper, "Please wake me at 5:00am." He left it where he knew she would find it.

The next morning, the man woke up, only to discover it was 9:00am and he had missed his flight. Furious, he was about to go and see why his wife hadn't wakened him, when he noticed a piece of paper by the bed. The paper said, "It is 5:00am. Wake up."

Man cannot get the better of woman, no way!

A couple drove down a country road for several miles, not saying a word. An earlier discussion had led to an argument, and neither of them wanted to concede their position. As they passed a farmyard with cows, goats, and pigs, the husband asked sarcastically, "Relatives of yours?" "Yep," the wife replied, "In-laws." Lets face it. Men are not equipped for these kind of contests. God may have created man before

woman, but there is always a rough draft before the masterpiece.

However, when the woman has no opportunity to answer back the man takes full advantage of the situation; remember the old Jewish Catskill comics of Vaudeville days?

I just got back from a pleasure trip. I took my mother-in-law to the airport.

Someone stole all my credit cards, but I won't be reporting it. The thief spends less than my wife did.

We always hold hands. If I let go, she shops. My wife and I went back to the hotel where we spent our wedding night, only this time I stayed in the bathroom and cried.

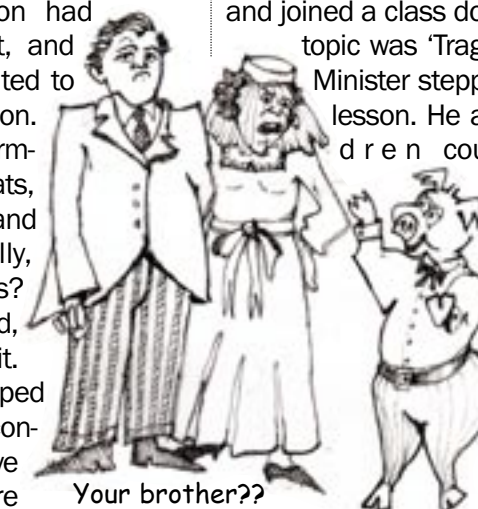
She was at the beauty shop for two hours. That was only for the estimate. She got a mudpack and looked great for two days. Then the mud fell off.

Why do Jewish men die before their wives? They want to.

A Jewish boy comes home from school and tells his mother he has a part in the play. She asks, "What part is it?" The boy says, "I play the part of the Jewish husband." The mother scowls and says, "Go back and tell the teacher you want a speaking part."

But to change the subject Have you heard this little story:

Tony Blair was visiting a primary school and joined a class doing English. The topic was 'Tragedy'. The Prime Minister stepped up to do the lesson. He asked if the children could describe a tragedy. Little Johnny piped up 'If my friend went into the country, had a ride on a tractor that overturned and killed him. That would be a



FEMALE MULTITASKING It was a big Chelsea Tractor type vehicle, black with shiny chrome bits. I could see the driver very clearly as she drew level to my seat on the 'bus that was taking me to Edinburgh Airport on Monday 16th April this year. I was slightly higher up than she was so I got a very good view of her left hand and arm curled around the top of the steering wheel and the mobile phone in her right hand held fast to her right ear into which she jabbered animatedly. But what was that on her lap? I couldn't believe my eyes! Lying on the cushion spread over her knees was a very young baby suckling her left breast. I thought I must be seeing things so I raised myself a little way off my seat and craned round to make sure that what I was seeing was not a figment of my vivid imagination. But it was not; driving, conversing on the phone and suckling the child was all a mere multitasking experience for this mum who would have no doubt sued the pants off a driver had he ran her child down whilst making a phone call.

The possibility of killing her own baby would not have occurred to her. What has the world come to?

tragedy!

Tony Blair, somewhat unusually, thought for a short while and said 'No that is not a tragedy, that is an accident. Anyone else?'

Mary interjected: - 'If the school bus crashed down the side of a mountain and all the children were killed - that would be a tragedy!'

Tony Blair said 'Oh no that would be a great loss but not a tragedy'

Joseph offered another catastrophe to fit the definition:- 'If you and Mrs prime minister and all your cabinet ministers were in a plane that was shot down by friendly fire and you were all killed - that would be a tragedy!'

'Yes, said Mr Blair, a Rory Bremner grin on his face,' that would indeed be a tragedy, but do you know why?'

Mary said, 'well it wouldn't be a great loss!' And then Johnny added 'Not an accident either!'

BEN GRAND

Your brother??

IN TOUCH 2007 ISSUE 2

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Words, Words, Words

All creatures great and small by Coleen Carlile



It's time to let the cat out of the bag. An acquaintance of mine is currently trying to keep the bailiffs at bay. It's a pretty kettle of fish, I can tell you!

He came to me with a hangdog look last week and told me he had been in debt for donkeys' years. As the black sheep of the family he had always been a dark horse and whenever a difficult situation arose he would say he had to see a man about a dog and disappear, grinning like a Cheshire cat. Now he's crying crocodile tears but he's barking up the wrong tree if he wants my help because I'm struggling to keep the wolf from the door myself.

As a nation of animal lovers it's not surprising their activities constantly crop up in our vocabulary. To let the cat out of the bag has its origins in medieval times. Vendors purporting to be selling a pig, for instance, would present the item in a sealed bag to the customer. More wary buyers would open the bag to check their purchase, which might well be a cat, not the expected pig. Thus the secret was out. There are several theories for the term 'at bay' but the most likely is concerned with stag hunting. When the stag tires of the chase, he turns to face the pursuing hounds, confusing the baying pack and keeping them 'at bay' rather than going in for the kill.

A mess, or problem, is often described as a 'pretty kettle of fish'. One explanation for this phrase is that it is a corruption of the word kiddle, which was a type of trap put across a stream to catch fish. Once this had been in place for some time, it collected more debris than fish,

and would have provoked the sarcastic comment from the owner of the kiddle.

In medieval times, if a dog had caused death to a human, it was put on trial and sentenced to death by hanging. A hangdog look first described a person who was fit to die, like a dog, for his crimes, but subsequently simply came to mean 'shame-faced'. Donkeys' years had nothing to do with the longevity of the animal's life, but referred to the length of his ears! The original expression was 'as long as a donkey's ears', but it was so longwinded it was shortened to the current expression. And no, I'm not auditioning for Call My Bluff – that is the truth!

Shepherds used to think that black sheep disturbed the rest of the flock. Their fleeces did not fetch as much money as white ones either, so all-in-all they were regarded as a liability. A dark horse refers to a promising young horse whose identity has been concealed until he has been tried out on the racecourse. Benjamin Disraeli is credited with introducing the term in his novel The Young Duke (1831).

'Going to see a man about a dog' is often used in a social gathering as

a euphemism for visiting the toilet. Generally, it is said in order to disguise one's real intentions. It was originally coined in the play 'Flying Scud' which was staged in London in 1866. One character used that excuse to get himself out of difficult situations. The play died but the expression lived on.

Most people assume that grinning like a Cheshire cat ie smiling all over one's face (Crumbs! There's another one!) was first seen in Alice in Wonderland but it goes back as far as the fifteenth century and was used to describe one of Richard III gamekeepers called Caterling who had a very wide but unpleasant grin. The phrase was 'to grin like Cheshire Caterling' but was shortened to 'Cheshire Cat'.

The Romans and Greeks believed that the cunning crocodile gave a show of sighs and groans to arouse the curiosity of likely prey. 'Crocodile tears' became a figure of speech for false emotion. Raccoon hunting in America in the early nineteenth century gave rise to the expression 'barking up the wrong tree'. Since they were nocturnal, raccoons had to be hunted at night. Dogs were trained to chase them up a tree and then stand barking at the bottom until their masters came. In the dark, the dogs often picked the wrong tree, hence the expression.

'To keep the wolf from the door' means to ward off hunger, 'wolf' meaning hunger. In medieval times, the wolf was seen as a symbol of poverty or need. 'The big bad wolf' is always desperately hungry and in search of a meal. Thus 'keeping the wolf from the door' came to be known as keeping hunger at bay and keeping one's head above water (Oh dear, here we go again! They keep creeping in broadside. Aaagh!)

I am signing off before I get myself into deeper water. Your pleas for more will cut no ice with me!



The left hand shake a sign of peace

Our Scout group, the 43rd Epping Forest South Group, played host to 520 members of the Scout Association from the whole of the Epping Forest District on St Georges' day. It was a sight to see on a glorious sunny day that was quite unusual for the time of year. The 43rd EFSG won the district flag for the best group in Epping Forest South something that the leaders were justifiably proud of bringing a rare smile to Rob Rose's face.

Scouts, Sea Cadets and Cubs formed into columns in the car park to raise the union flag and then paraded into the church in a long line that seemed never to end. Each troop carried their individual flags into the church. The cubs formed a guard of honour for the entry of the District commissioner, Brian Gillman and the Worshipful Mayor of Redbridge Councillor Mr Ashok Kumar with his wife. The photograph shows from left to right, Brian Gillman, Robin Rose who has been the group leader of the St Thomas' cubs for many years as well as being the assistant district commissioner for cubs, the Mayor and Father Roger Baralet, now retired national chaplain to the scout movement.

The first such parade on St George's day took place in 1947, six years after the death of the founder Robert Baden Powell 1857-1941.

After the main service in Westminster Abbey the scouts paraded down the south aisle to the chapel of St George where a plaque was unveiled by the Duke of Gloucester who, whilst uncovering it, said, "In gratitude for his life of service to the youth of the world." Trumpeters of the Royal Hussars sounded a fanfare. Upon the stone was written, 'TO THE MEMORY OF ROBERT BADEN POWELL CHIEF SCOUT OF THE WORLD. The Organ pealed for the last time and died away, and the voices of Lord Rowallan, the Chief Scout of the British Empire and the Commonwealth, and of Finnola, Lady Somers, the Chief Commissioner of Guides, were heard leading the renewal of the Scout and Guide promises.

The parade was the first of a series of

events to mark the centenary of scouting. There followed a camp in the friary grounds on Saturday 26th May and singing round the camp fire that was certainly not dampened by the continuous rain that contrasted dramatically with the warm summer-like weather on St George's day. The camp fire, more of a bonfire actually, was not lit with the traditional wooden sliver rubbed into a log (how many of today's scouts still know how to do that?) but instead smelled heavily of kerosene. The object was to get as many of the estimated 500,000,000 women and men from all countries and cultures around the world, who have undertaken to live by the Scout Promise and Law, under canvas on this particular day.

The leaders seemed to enjoy themselves even more than the boys and girls as they screamed out the first lines of those well-known campfire songs from Alice the Camel to Ging Gang Gooly. That was particularly ASL Andrew Barrett seen in the photograph on page 3 in mid performance of Fr Abraham Had Seven Sons' or was it My name is Joe? At 8.30pm, with some difficulty, a beacon was lit which, due to its enclosed position under the trees, would hardly have been seen by the 200,000 UK scouts around the nation who were simultaneously lighting theirs.

The history of scouting in St Thomas' goes back to the found-

ing of the 43rd Group in 1938. The leaders over the past forty years, whilst now retired, still maintain a proud interest in the best group in the district, which they had a hand in forming.

Lou Macpherson, the original 'Big Mac', also referred to as 'Old Fat Mac' or OFM, who writes to the editor on page 21, started running the group in 1965 after the departure of Fr. Killain. Lou was Akela for 20 years and Group Scout Leader for a little over ten years. He retired in 1982 but to this day is greeted by young and not so young fathers, usually dwarfing him in size, as Akela. In recognition of his many years of sterling work he was awarded a Scout medal on retirement.

How many of those photographed here in the sixties are still in the parish? A special prize might be forthcoming to whoever can name every one of those pictured and their whereabouts now..

Derek Bloggs took over as GSL after Lou retired and according to Lou Fr. Roger has been involved in scouting for some 60 years. Which belies his present day youthfulness.



The next centenary function is on 1st August 2007 when Scouts of every age from around the UK will join with 28 million Scouts from around the world to celebrate the dawn of a new Century of Scouting commemorating the 8:00 am ceremony on that date one hundred years ago when, Robert Baden-Powell, blew his kudu horn on Brownsea Island to open the world's first Scout camp.

The Epping Forest South district will take part in a sunrise ceremony at 8 am on the green in front of All Saints Church to celebrate both the history of scouting and its bright future. The ceremony, which will include a breakfast following the main flag break, will be performed in unison with Scouts from around the UK and the world.

And finally for all those who never asked the question, why is the left-handshake a sign of peace? It is not only a sign of peace but also an outward sign of trust in the other. African warriors held their spear in the right hand and a shield in the left hand. Shaking with the left hand implies no need for a shield and assumes therefore that the other will not carry a weapon or if he does there is the implication of trust that he will not use it.

There is an interesting similarity here with St Francis of Assisi. When St Francis set out for Egypt at the time of the crusades his brethren who were to travel with him suggested taking food for the journey but St Francis saw this as a lack of trust in the people they would meet on the way, therefore, they took nothing. Of course these people would feed them. As a result of the mutual trust that this symbolic act portrayed, St Francis and the Franciscan friars to this day enjoy a special relationship with Muslims around the world. Such symbolic acts permeate scouting along with a myriad of social and cultural procedures arising out of BP's (as he was affectionately known at the siege of Mafeking) 1908 publication 'Scouting for Boys'. Many of the issues referred to in that book, radical in its time, are very relevant to modern day society.

There can be no better activity for youngsters in the contemporary world than scouting. How can people go to war when they have been brought up with the likes of ASL Andrew Barrett making a fool of himself around the camp fire just for a laugh?

IN TOUCH 2007 ISSUE 2

• COMPETITION •

WHO IS THIS?

This three-year-old boy, yes, it is a boy, is a mainstay in the parish and is the father of many who are also very active in the parish. In the late nineteenth century when St Thomas's was being built; the vicar of All Saints, who shared the same family name as this boy, warned the locals to look out for trouble, the Catholics are on the way.



WIN!

£25

Token of your choice

Competition rules

- Entries must be submitted to the editor marked 'competition' with the entrant's full name, address and telephone number.
- The first correct and properly submitted answer will win £25:00 or a voucher of your choice.
- The winner will be notified immediately by 'phone and announced in the next issue of In Touch
- Friends, family and anybody involved in the publication of In Touch are excluded from entering the competition

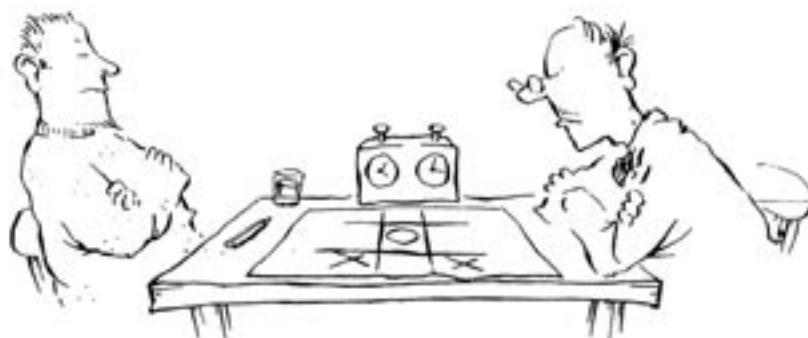
Winner of the last competition was Angela Meyler who was the first of twelve people to spot Colette Collins. Four people thought the photograph was of Bernadette Harris. I am sure both Colette and Bernadette will be interested to know that. This has been the most successful competition so far with twenty people writing in with their suggestions.



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FACE A FACE

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