

From the Vicarage,



At the end of August our three parishes held our annual children's holiday club. This was the fourth year running that we have held such an event and this year we met in the Memorial Hall at Great Doddington, with the use of the playing field just behind. Once again it was a huge success. We had a record number of children taking part (50 in all, from all three of our villages), and a record number of helpers as well. Once again we used material produced by Scripture Union and this year's topic was 'Show-Stoppers' with a very strong 'show-biz' theme. As always the children behaved magnificently and produced some great work as well as having loads of fun and learning more about our friend Jesus. Once again it was five mornings, and on some days there were extra activities in the afternoons as well, including, for the older ones, a great highlight - a trip by minibuses to the Children's B.B.C. studios in London with a guided tour there. In these days when children often receive a bad press it is so good to see such enthusiasm, harmless fun within a safe environment, and extremely good behaviour throughout. Well done indeed, to all those who took part, of whatever age. Yes, there were lots of helpers, but I must thank especially here Richard and Jo Meekings, members of Wilby Church, who once again headed up the team and shouldered the majority of the preparation and delivery work for us.

Personally it was a very busy time for Jo and me because immediately we finished holiday club we dashed home to pack because we were leading our church party to Iona, departing that very night on the sleeper train to Glasgow. We spent nearly a week with the Christian community on Iona and despite very mixed weather (we had some rain every day) our party of eight from the three villages and beyond had a great time together and there are many stories that could (and probably will) be told. It was a great time. We learned a lot from the experience of living and working together; we laughed a lot, worshipped a lot, and some of us even discovered we have talents we didn't know we possessed! Would we go again? You'll have to ask the individual members of the party that, but yes, I certainly shall. This was my second visit and I shall definitely return in, I hope, the not too distant future.

But time moves on and autumn is upon us. As I write this month we have just celebrated Harvest Thanksgiving at Ecton. We held a lovely Harvest Supper in the village hall on Saturday evening although the numbers attending were low, but the All-Age service on Sunday saw many new faces and we hope very much to see them again. For this service we had our friend Sheila Addison with us along with a young Nepali friend, and they shared with us something of the great Harvest of souls that God is winning on the Roof of the World. We learned about the physical harvest too and wonder how most of the people there manage on a diet of just rice, dahl (lentil broth), and vegetables – twice a day, every day, and that's the fortunate ones! The Church that Sheila supports, along with many friends here, has now grown to about 8,000 members, with over seventy congregations around the country.

Ecton Church has still escaped attack from the lead thieves, but Wilby Church roof was attacked twice in a week last month. Clearly we must all continue to be just as vigilant and report anything we regard as suspicious – even, or especially, at unsociable hours of the night. Good news at Ecton is that the long-awaited gates for the South porch have now arrived and are in place. We are now seeking a specification and quotations for redecorating the porch. There was little point in undertaking this until the gates were in position.

With very best wishes,
Chris Pearson