

ST MARY MAGDALENE ECTON



PARISH MAGAZINE

JULY 1997

Contributions welcome towards cost of producing the magazine.

PARISH AND VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

BELL RINGERS

Contract Dorothy Creed
Tel: 01604 407864

CRICKET CLUB

Captain: Steve Wheatmen
Tel: 01604 401714
Secretary: Hilary Kearsley
Tel: 01604 810922

FELLOWSHIP

Contact Joyce Orford
Tel: 01604 414245
2nd Tuesday in month
2.30 pm Rectory Room

MONDAY CLUB

Contract Freda Richards
Tel: 01604 405928
Twice monthly on Mondays
2.30 pm Rectory Room

MUMS & TOTS

Contact Kate Kirton
Tel: 01604 409809
Most Wednesdays
2.00-3.15 pm Rectory Room

PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: David Dicks
Tel: 01604 407145

PRE-SCHOOL

Monday Tuesday Thursday
and Friday 9.15 - 11.45 am
Youth Club Hall, High Street
Tel: 01604 784711

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Headteacher: Sheila Sayers
Tel: 01604 409213

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Contact: Stella Gibson
Tel: 01604 405350
1st Tuesday in month
7.30 pm Rectory Room

YOUTH & SENIOR CLUBS

Contact: Mary Beesley
Tel: 01604 810577
Youth: Wednesday 7-9 pm
Senior: Tuesday 8.00 pm
Club Hall, High Street, Ecton

MAGAZINE EDITOR

Anne Henderson, 48 High Street, Ecton
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MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTOR

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RECTOR

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Ecton Rectory, West Street
Tel: Home 01604 416322

CHURCHWARDENS

Dorothy Creed, 22a Church
View - Tel: 01604 407864
Walter Barty, 1 East Butterfield Ct
Northampton Tel: 01604 642117

PCC SECRETARY

Gwenda Barty, 1 East Butterfield Ct
Northampton Tel: 01604 642117

PCC TREASURER

Les Mitchell, 12 Berrydale
N'ton - Tel: 01604 415013

ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER

Mary Dicks, Field House
West St - Tel: 01604 407145

STEWARDSHIP RECORDER

Marian Gleave, 19 Church
View - Tel: 01604 407889

SUNDAY FAMILY

Contact Trudie Warner
Tel: 01604 412317
9.25 am Rectory Room
(Not First Sunday in the month)

CHURCH ORGANIST/CHOIR MASTER

Frank Brown
40 The Scarplands, Duston
N'ton - Tel: 01604 471026

**ECTON PARISH
MAGAZINE**

You will find

Church & Village Diary

on pages 4 and 5

Church Rotas

on pages 6 and 7

All copy for August/September
magazine to Ecton House clearly
labelled 'parish magazine' by
14th July please

A NOTE OF PROFOUND THANKS

I was overwhelmed with your generosity on my retirement from parish work. Patricia and I will have memories of a church packed with friends engaged in a glorious act of worship.

We will take with us to Cambridge your picture of Northampton and the gift of £600 will be used to help fund my sabbatical in the autumn. I also want to take this opportunity of thanking the many parishioners who sent cards and letters expressing kind, sensitive and loving thoughts. We have both been greatly helped by your prayerful support.

The purpose of going away is to review my life, dispose of some mental and spiritual baggage, and to set one's sights on a new life in retirement. Through no fault of yours I have become increasingly fatigued and saw a change was necessary for the good of all.

Ecton will always be held with reverence and respect in our hearts and minds.

Thank you once again for everything.

May God bless you all.

Peter Naylor, Rector

WHY DO WE HAVE CANDLES IN CHURCH?

Candles serve an important reminder that Christ is the Light of the World (see John 1), and offer a useful visual aid to worship. It is most likely that the lighting of candles and lamps in Christian worship is bound up with the Vigil service that was held on the Saturday night - Sunday morning of the Easter weekend, to which the 'many lights' of Acts 20v8 may be early evidence. The kindling of light at this service, although probably originally entirely functional, became a liturgical celebration of which the lighting of the Paschal candle is a traditional continuance.

By the fourth century, both lamps and candles were in normal use in Christian worship. The Spanish Christian poet, Prudentius (c. 348), in his hymn 'Inventor rutitis' says:

"the lamps hang by flexible cords and shine over the ceilings to which they are fixed, and the flame fed by floating circles, casts it's light through clear glass. You would believe that the heavens were adorned with the twin constellation of the Wain."

As far as the Church of England goes, there was considerable latitude as to the use of candles prior to the Reformation, but since the Restoration under Charles II there is continuous evidence for their use and some of our cathedrals and greater churches possess altar candlesticks dating from the seventeenth century.

As with church decoration in general, the use of candles in no way affects the validity of any service, and their use is a matter of choice. Having said this though, candles provide such a striking reminder of the light of Christ made manifest in the darkness that it would be a churlish churchgoer indeed who objected to their use.

"The beauty of holiness" is a phrase that also comes to mind at this juncture. For candles, as with all church decorations are symbols pointing to God, reminding us of the beauty and holiness of the creator of the world.

Marcus Alcock

CHURCH & VILLAGE DIARY

Tuesday, 1st July

- 9.00 am Holy Communion
7.30 pm Women's Institute meet in the Rectory Room

ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE : Thursday 3rd July

- 10.15 am Holy Communion

SEVENTH AFTER PENTECOST : Sunday, 6th July

- 9.30 am Parish Communion and Sunday Family
1 Corinthians 12.27 - 13 end : Matthew 18. 21-end
6.00 pm Evensong

Monday, 7th July

- 2.30 pm Monday Club meet in the Rectory Room

Tuesday, 8th July

- 2.30 pm Ecton Fellowship meet in the Rectory Room
9.00 am Holy Communion

EIGHTH AFTER PENTECOST : Sunday, 13th July

- 9.30 am Parish Communion and Sunday Family
Galatians 5. 16-25 : John 15. 16-end
6.00 pm Evensong
8.00 pm Concert with the Laurence Lloyd Singers and the
Northamptonshire County Youth Senior Girls Choir

Tuesday, 15th July

- 9.00 am Holy Communion

NINTH AFTER PENTECOST : Sunday, 20th July

- 9.30 am Parish Communion
Ephesians 6. 10-20 : John 17. 11b-19
6.00 pm Evensong

Monday, 21st July

- 2.30 pm Monday Club meet in the Rectory Room

- 7.30 am **ST MARY MAGDALENE : Tuesday, 22nd July**
Holy Communion
- 6.30 pm **FRIENDS' FESTIVAL : Wednesday, 23rd July**
Festival Evensong
- 7.00 pm **ST JAMES THE APOSTLE : Friday, 25th July**
Holy Communion
- 9.30 am **TENTH AFTER PENTECOST : Sunday, 27th July**
Parish Communion
Philippians 2. 1-11 : John 13. 1-15
- 6.00 pm Evensong
- Tuesday, 29th July**
- 9.00 am Holy Communion
- ELEVENTH AFTER PENTECOST**
Sunday, 3rd August
- 9.30 am Parish Communion
2 Corinthians 4. 1-10 : John 13. 31-35
- 6.00 pm Evensong

From the Registers will appear next month

Let all dwellers on earth recognise
and know this basic truth:
we have not come into this world
for the sake of strife and division
(God forbid),
nor for the sake of hatred and envy,
provocation, and the shedding of blood
(God forbid);
rather, we have come into the world
in order to recognise and know thee.
Be thou blessed for ever.

From Rabbi Nathan of Bratzlav's prayer for peace.



COFFEE ROTA

6th July	Alice Adams & Wynne Voss
13th July	Pat Peacock & Dorothy Creed
20th July	Jean Leigh & Brenda Jones
27th July	Ingrid & Keith Cartwright



CLEANING ROTA

5th July	YELLOW	B
12th July	BLUE	A
19th July	GREEN	B
26th July	ORANGE	A

BRASS CLEANING ◆ Saturday, 5th July

ROTAS	SERVER	CHALICE	CRUCIFER
6th July	Graham Jordan	Graham Jordan	Graham Jordan
13th July	Charles Jordan	Alice Adams	Charles Jordan
20th July	Pat Baylis	Pat Baylis	Pat Baylis
27th July	Marcus Alcock	Alice Adams	Marcus Alcock

WEEKDAY SERVERS

Tuesday, 1st July	Trudie Warner
ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE Thursday, 3rd July	Marcus Alcock
Tuesday, 8th July	Dorothy Creed
Tuesday, 15th July	Trudie Warner
ST MARY MAGDALENE Tuesday, 22nd July	Dorothy Creed
ST JAMES THE APOSTLE Friday, 25th July	Trudie Warner
Tuesday, 29th July	Dorothy Creed

CHURCHWARDENS' NOTES

During the interregnum would anyone wishing to arrange a wedding or a baptism please contact either of the churchwardens. Please note that during this time at least one month's notice is required for a baptism and that these will take place during the normal Sunday morning service.

Also, anyone wishing to receive the Holy Sacrament in their own home due to ill health should likewise contact a churchwarden.

We would like to bring to your attention the Concert on July 13th, an advertisement for which appears elsewhere in this magazine and we look forward to your support at what promises to be a splendid evening's entertainment.

The celebrants at Holy Communion during the forthcoming month are as follows:

Tuesday July 1st 9.00 am St Thomas' Day	The Reverend Michael Weber
Thursday July 3rd 10.15 a.m.	The Reverend John Westwood
Sunday July 6th 9.30 a.m.	The Reverend Warren Warnes
Tuesday July 8th 9.00 a.m.	The Reverend John Westwood
Sunday July 13th 9.30 a.m.	The Reverend John Westwood*
Tuesday July 15th 9.00 a.m.	The Reverend Michael Weber
Sunday July 20th 9.30 a.m. St Mary Magdalene's Day	The Reverend Ollie Killingback
Tuesday July 22nd 7.30 p.m. St James' Day	The Reverend John Westwood
Friday July 25th 7.00 p.m.	The Reverend John Westwood
Sunday July 27th 9.30 a.m.	The Reverend John Duncan
Tuesday July 29th 9.00 a.m.	The Reverend John Westwood
Sunday August 3rd 9.30 a.m.	The Reverend John Duncan

*Provisional

The provision of lay readers for Sunday Evensong is proving more difficult to arrange but unless notice is given to the contrary it may be assumed that Evensong will take place each Sunday evening at 6 p.m.

Dorothy Creed

MONDAY CLUB

First I must apologise for missing last month's magazine.

We held our A.G.M. on April 28th when two new committee members were elected: Mrs Jean Haycox and Mrs Doreen Ward.

Seventy pounds from the March Whist Drive was given to the Church Brass Fund in memory of Mrs Eileen Collip. This year's donation of £20 was given to the Cynthia Spencer Hospital.

We were very sorry to hear our President resign as Mr and Mrs Beesley would be moving from the village. We thank her very much for her help during her 17 years in office and wish them well in their retirement?! It was with great pleasure that Mrs Dora Reynolds, being a life member, accepted the presidency.

It is also with sadness we say goodbye to Peter and Patricia. We shall miss Peter's help on our evening trips to get us in for a drink! Not everyone wanted us!

The Whist Drives were still well attended and we shall start again in September.

Our Club dates are:

July 7th and 21st
August 4th and 18th

Evening Outing - 6th August 6-9.00 p.m. - everyone welcome.

Freda Richards

W.I. REPORT

Tuesday, 1st July 1997 : Rectory Room 7.30 p.m.

Speaker: Mrs B Evelyn 'Out of Barbara's Basket'

Competition: Small Basket of Fruit

Teas: Mrs C Gyte and Mrs B Shearing

AUGUST - No meeting

Tuesday, 2nd September 1997 : Rectory Room 7.30 p.m.

'Living and Nursing in Saudi Arabia' : Mrs R Cobbald

Competition: 'A Memento from Abroad'

Teas: Mrs D Langley and Mrs M Harlott

The meeting observed a minute's silence in memory of Dorothy Cross. Dorothy was a valued and loved member of the Institute and will be sadly missed. An acknowledgement has been received from David Cross expressing his appreciation for the letter of sympathy sent on behalf of all members.

Denise Langley thanked members for letters and flowers received concerning the recent loss of Ted who was also a familiar and loved figure in the village.

The outing to Hatton County World, and afterwards the excellent tea at Cubbington, was voted a great success.

Vote of thanks to Millie Harlott for her excellent organisation.

Visitors were welcomed to the meeting, this helped to swell the numbers somewhat, as we were a bit thin on the ground! Our speak was Mia Butler, no newcomer to this group.

Mia is a native of Northamptonshire - she did live in California for some years, working in marine conservation, but has now returned home to take up her many other interests. She is an author of some

repute, and has written several books on differing aspects of Northamptonshire, including 'Exploring the Nene Way', 'Rambles in Northamptonshire', 'Let's Go Walkabout' and others. At the meeting her subject was 'Whales'!

We enjoyed excellent slides showing some of her exploits and contact with these large mammals. Her interest has taken her on many exciting trips the world over. If you have ever wondered where that 'whale-bone' came from in your corsets - it's from the mouth of some species of whales which forms a sieve when they are feeding!! It is a fibrous material, not actual bone! The sheer size of these mammals is breathtaking. I would think one should not be of a nervous disposition when taking up this work!

Vote of thanks : Margaret Scott

Competition Results: 'Seascape' - Margaret, June, Millie

June Marshman

BRITISH RED CROSS APPEAL

The total raised this year in the village was £183.

I would like to thank everyone for their generous donations and also much appreciation to the collectors:

Dorothy Creed - Marian Gleave - Barbara Jones - Freda Richards -
Mike Baylis - The Three Horseshoes - The Worlds End

Sylvia Sanders

CHRISTIAN AID 1997

Our final total for the annual house-to-house collection in Ecton village was £160.

Very many thanks to all collectors who gave up much time to deliver and collect, and also to those who gave so generously to reach this total.

Joan Dickins

ECTON PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING : MONDAY 19 MAY 1997

PRESENT: David Dicks (chairman), Jean Haycox, Sheila Ingram, Sylvia Saunders, Tony Green, Ty Moffett, Ted Needham.

APOLOGIES: Vic Lester, Councillor D Bletsoe Brown.

There were three members of the village present and P.C. Littleton from Earls Barton Police Station. The Chairman gave his annual report and the unaudited accounts for 1996/97 were approved and signed. P.C. Littleton gave the crime figures for April which were discussed at some length. Concern was also raised regarding some areas of the village where there are garden shrubs and bushes which overhand the pavements. Contact would be made with the householders concerned. The meeting then continued into the A.G.M. of the Parish Council.

The Chairman was re-elected. Sheila Ingram wished to stand down as Vice Chairman and Tony Green was elected. The Chairman expressed his thanks to Sheila for her continual support during recent years. The members of the Planning and Lighting Sub committees were agreed as before.

MATTERS ARISING: It was agreed to proceed with the purchase of new equipment for the Playing Field. Sheila Ingram reported that the new Parish Appraisal book was now being printed and would be ready for the launch on 9th June.

PLANNING MATTERS: Consent received for extension to 96 High Street.

HIGHWAY MATTERS: Concern was expressed about the remains of a fallen tree at the side of the A4500 opposite Porters Lodge. John Murray of N.C.C. to be informed.

STREET LIGHTING: The Clerk reported that the replacement of Column No. 4 (Northampton Road) had been deferred until later in the year.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT:

N.C.C. (Ecton School - March)	£15.00
N.A.L.C. (Donation)	£10.00
East Midlands Electricity	£250.86
Audit Commission (95/6 Accounts)	£131.60
Cornhill Insurance	£474.84
East Midlands Electricity - Repairs	£112.80
N.A.L.C. (Subscriptions)	£59.50
Mrs P Hall (Salary and Expenses)	£113.37
N.C.C. (Ecton School - May)	£15.00

ANY OTHER BUSINESS: Agreed that the 'Millennium' be put on the agenda for July meeting.

David Dicks - May 1997

ECTON FELLOWSHIP

The last meeting of this season will be on Tuesday, July 8th at 2.30 pm.

We are having a Bring and Buy for our Charities. Please bring anything for sale - cakes, garden produce, groceries, unwanted gifts, etc.

This will be followed by an opportunity for everyone who wishes to give a favourite reading or poem etc. on the theme 'Animals'.

Joan Dickins

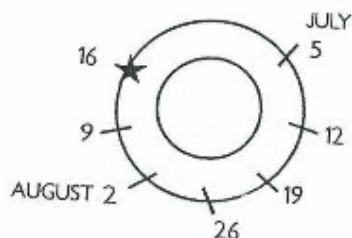
Tea List: Joyce Orford and Jean Costall

COUNTDOWN

to the

SUMMER FETE AND FLOWER FESTIVAL

16 AUGUST 2-5 p.m.



WE HAVEN'T MUCH TIME, BUT THAT IS OUR
CHALLENGE

THERE WILL BE THE USUAL WONDERFUL
DISPLAY OF FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS
IN THE CHURCH, AND DELICIOUS TEAS
IN THE RECTORY ROOM.

AND A TREASURE HUNT FOR THE CHILDREN,
RUN BY TRUDIE WARNER - 01604 412317

PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD!

OFFERS OF HELP AND GIFTS, PLEASE, TO:-

TEAS	Millie Harlott	01604 405938
BOOKS etc	Anne Henderson	01604 405942
CAKES & PRESERVES	Joan Dickins	01604 415576
HANDICRAFTS	Daphne Allison	01604 409467
BRIC-A-BRAC	Ingrid Cartwright	01604 415806
PLANTS & PRODUCE	Brian Saunders	01604 409444
FLOWERS FOR THE CHURCH	Pauline Charles or Freda Richards	01604 409493 01604 405928
PRIZES FOR RAFFLE	David & Mary Dicks	01604 407145
PRIZES FOR TOMBOLA	Mike & Pat Baylis or Tony Green	01604 407707 01604 407141

**PROCEEDS WILL GO TO THE
GENERAL FUND OF THE CHURCH**

THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

I am happy to report that in the year 1996/7 we in Ecton, plus a few friends outside the village, have raised £1,065.32 towards the Society's ever increasing needs.

This splendid sum was raised in a variety of ways as shown below:

Christingle	157.93
Christmas Carol Singing	74.58
Home Collection Boxes	292.31
Music Evening	540.50
Total	£1,065.32

A great effort, and thanks go to all the very many donors and also to the few who have worked so hard to raise this magnificent sum.

If you would like to have a box at home in which you can collect your small change please let me know.

I am well aware of the many demands on all our purses these days but this charity is specifically aimed at supporting children who need help.

I would like to thank all those kind friends in Ecton, who have helped me through these difficult days following the loss of my beloved wife Dorothy, and for the floral tributes and donations which were sent.

On behalf of the family, I am so grateful to Peter, our Rector for his compassion to Dorothy, and for the funeral service which he conducted so sympathetically.

David Cross

RECTOR'S RETIREMENT PRESENT

The Churchwardens wish to express their gratitude to all those who contributed to Peter's retirement present.

The contributions came from far and wide and expressed the high regard of the parish towards our Rector and his wife, Patricia.

A full church enjoyed the Rector's farewell service which was attended by the Bishop of Brixworth, the Archdeacon of Northampton and the Rural Dean. A most moving occasion.

The rain held off as we gathered on the lawn of Ecton House for light refreshments and drinks. We were joined by the Bishop of Peterborough for the presentation of gifts to Peter and Patricia from the Church, Ecton House, the Three Horseshoes and other friends.

Another good "Ecton Experience"!

ECTON : A NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PARISH

On a warm evening on Monday 9th June, villagers, friends, contributors and subscribers gathered at Ecton House to celebrate the launch of our village book. What an achievement! I particularly like the cover picture of the approach to the village encouraging me to open the book to explore and learn more about Ecton. Thank you Rodney and Sheila and the many others who have produced a book to be proud of about a village I'm proud to live in.

With a drink, buffet, raffle, speeches and friendship we again enjoyed ourselves as we saw for the first time our village book.

Anne Henderson

THE CHURCH OF ST MARY MAGDALENE, ECTON

SUNDAY 13th JULY 8.00 p.m.

A CONCERT TO SUIT ALL TASTES

with the

LAURENCE LLOYD SINGERS

and the

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY YOUTH
SENIOR GIRLS CHOIR**

CONDUCTOR : STEPHEN MEAKINS

ACCOMPANIST : RICHARD HOLLOWAY

Programmes available on the Door

£2.00 and £1.00 concessions

All proceeds to Ecton Parish Church Restoration Fund

EARLS BARTON COMMUNITY TRUST

Linking together ... to build our future

EARLS BARTON OPEN GARDENS DAYSunday 13th July 1997

Nine gardens open to the public from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Combined Entrance Fee £2 (Children free)

Proceeds to Earls Barton Community Trust

Teas, Plant Staff, Children's Quiz. Everyone welcome!

SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO USPG 1996	1994	1995	1996
ST MARY, BOZEAT	25	30	20
ST MARY, ALL SAINTS & ST MARY GREAT & LITTLE HARROWDEN W ORL	37	130	0
ST MARY, ORLINGBOURY	220	262	10
ALL SAINTS, GREAT HARROWDEN	0	0	39
ST MARY THE VIRGIN, LITTLE HARROWDEN	0	0	68
ST MARY MAGDALENE, ECTON	500	400	350
ALL HALLOWS, WELLINGBOROUGH	1,271	350	0
ALL SAINTS, WELLINGBOROUGH	500	0	1,100
ST ANDREW, WELLINGBOROUGH	472	403	421
ST BARNABAS, WELLINGBOROUGH	105	0	0
ST MARK, WELLINGBOROUGH	62	515	233
ST NICHOLAS W ST MARY THE VIRGIN, GREAT DODDINGTON W WILBY	37	20	0
SS PETER & PAUL, SYWELL	0	10	0
ST NICHOLAS, OVERSTONE	0	0	90
ALL SAINTS, MEARS ASHBY	0	10	24
WELLINGBOROUGH DEANERY	3,229	2,130	2,355
ARCHDEACONRY OF NORTHAMPTON	15,486	14,313	12,386



DOWN WITH VAT

How YOU could help to bring VAT on Church building work down.

Church buildings are a great delight and part of a precious spiritual and architectural heritage. But they can cost a great deal to maintain and repair. This burden is made heavier by the VAT that is added to the cost of much of such work. Something needs to be done.

We think there is something that you could do. We believe it could be effective if church members together brought pressure upon the government to reduce the VAT on church building.

FACTS

Overall the government receives far more in VAT from church building work than it offers in grants through English Heritage.

In 1996/67 English Heritage has budgetted a DECREASE in grants to churches of £810,000.

LOCAL VOICES

The voices of people at a local level would have power if you, and as many of your church members as possible, wrote to your local MP, MEP and Parliamentary candidates.

[If anyone wants to write they can get a copy of a briefing paper offering facts that will help you to make your letters accurate and telling, and also a copy of a sample letter from Ecton House.]

A significant reduction in VAT would release both money and energy for the work of witness and service. Of course we want to maintain our beautiful churches wherever we can but parishes need more help to make this possible.

DOWN TO 5%

The current discussion on VAT for alterations to listed buildings, which could be raised from zero to the full rate, makes this an opportune and critical moment. Our ultimate aim is to have VAT on all work in buildings for worship rated at 5%.

Alongside the letters from parishes in this diocese the campaign is also seeking to involve all the other dioceses through Bishops, Archdeacons and Diocesan Advisory Committees, the Amenity Societies, the Synodical process up to General Synod and other denominations.

PLEASE PLAY YOUR PART IN THIS. Write **NOW** to your **MP** and **MEP** and encourage as many people as possible in your parish to do the same. For the cost of a few stamps we could save thousands of pounds.

Mr S V Billings, DAC Chairman
The Venerable Michael Chapman, Archdeacon of Northampton
The Venerable Bernard Fernyhough, Archdeacon of Oakham

I would like to thank everyone for the beautiful flowers given to me on Sunday, 15th June. I am also extremely grateful for all the cards, gifts and good wishes I have received. Thank you everyone: I will miss you all.

Patricia Naylor

SUSTAINING WORSHIP IN THE VILLAGE

Response to Local Agenda 21

A report of a Day Conference held by
the Peterborough Diocesan Council for the Countryside
at Hunbury Hill Centre, Northampton on 19th November 1996

SETTING THE SCENE

The Revd Mervyn Wilson, chairman Council for the Countryside, welcomed those present (40). Sadly the Revd Anthony Hodgson was not able to come. He had telephoned at 7 a.m. to whisper that he had lost his voice and so the chairman would do his best to fill in. It might appear that the conference was dealing with two quite separate matters. I hope we shall see that they are necessary to one another. Our worship in Church cannot but reflect concern for the environment, or as we will say, for the created order which God has entrusted to human care. Our concern for the environment is rightly regarded as spiritual, as well as scientific and pragmatic. As creator, God is concerned with both its usefulness and beauty, feeding soul and body. Last year in our advice to a new bishop we affirmed that rural churches were community churches. Then we had considered ministry within the church structures and the Rural White Paper on the Countryside. This year we are spending the morning addressing the question of how the worship of rural churches may be sustained and the afternoon on sustainable development in the wider community of earth.

PRAYERS

A form of worship from the Iona Community Worship Book was used and then all read from Psalm 104.

TOWARDS 2000 - SUSTAINING WORSHIP IN RURAL PARISHES - the Revd Stephen Evans

Ten years ago the Religious Affairs Correspondent of The Times wrote: "The Church of England faces extinction in the countryside in the next 20 years". Well,

applications for redundancy are being processed and Pastoral Schemes are merging parishes into ever increasing benefices. Groupings of 4 or 5 parishes in the countryside are now the norm with groupings of 10 or 12 not uncommon in some dioceses. Is the scenario one of challenge or opportunity? Of defeat or the spur to new initiative? I like to think the latter is the case - a time for some creative Spirit-filled thinking and planning in which the living church takes up the perennial command to proclaim the Gospel.

Today is a very different world to the one which saw the building of our parish churches, and different to the world of our Victorian great-grandfathers. As Christians we know that we are called to be in, but not of, the world - but what is the world really like? We must listen to the sociologists. The work of Bishop Peter Selby at Durham and Grace Davey in Exeter is illuminating but disturbing. They tell us that whilst contemporary secular sociological thinking has moved from the industrial model to the post industrial model, the church has only just begun to move from the pre-industrial model to the industrial, and is thus completely out of step with the world in which it operates. Not in, but not of, the world, but in the wrong world! The pre-industrial world began to fall apart in the later 18th century. The focus was rural, with the village centre stage; the economy was largely agrarian and the parish church acted as a focus for most people's lives, described by Peter Selby as a God-the-Father-Church. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the industrial period, there was large population shifts from village to city where the church model has been described as entrepreneurial, a God-the-Spirit church. At the end of this century, the post industrial period, we find a dissatisfaction with urban life. People use the country as a place of escape, isolated from work. They bring with them into

There are six topic groups: social well-being; traffic and transport; development of the economy; pollution, energy and waste; countryside recreation and heritage; community awareness and involvement. Membership is open and includes representatives of local councils and of many voluntary groups and associations. Slowly they are discovering what they are about. The chairman has taken part in the countryside group and Anne Toms in community awareness.

Anne Toms then spoke. She quoted Ruth Etchells - "The mission of a rural church should be seen not as drawing people into it and its activities but as one of sending people away from itself to serve beyond it" ... and Bishop Westwood "The change from a religion of community to a religion of commitment which we have seen in the last 40 years carries with it a terrible sort of temptation which can be seen in some of our churches - to find our meaning as Christians within the church - the Bible did not say God so loved the church but God so loved the world." Anne said that the partnership Jesus taught and practised was not narrowly among the disciples for their own common purpose but ultimately one with all mankind. The churches need to put their own houses in order and are making slow progress. It is hoped that the Northamptonshire County Council through the Northants Environmental Forum on its part, and the churches on their part - not only the diocese but each parish - will search out ways in which we can show our love for the world in the spirit of the one who created it and redeemed it.

PUBLICATIONS

of Liturgical Commission - Church House Bookshop, Westminster.

of Northants Environment Forum - Planning and Transportation Dept, County Hall Northampton, NN1 1AX

of course in Christian Rural Studies - Ken Wilkinson, 2 Curborough Road, Lichfield, WS13 7NG

DELEGATES

Miss S. Addison, Mrs A. F. Aldrich, Revd Robert Barlow, Mrs June Bernstein, Miss A. E. Bottomley, Revd M. Champneys, Molly Dunkley, Stephen Ebury, Mrs Maureen Farnden, Revd & Mrs D. Faulks, Harry Faure Walker, Revd Daniel Foot, Revd Canon William Gibbs, Revd R. M. Giles, Steve & Jo Gluning, Revd Peter Gompertz, Mr R. Henman, Mrs Jan Hillyer, Revd A. Hodgson, Mrs Houghton, Mrs Pamela Jones, Revd Peter Lawrence, Dr S. Little, Mrs Anne Long, Mr W. R. Mackness, M. E. Pearson, Julia Pentelow, Franklyn Perring, Revd Edward Rainsberry, Revd Janet Robinson, Revd Canon Paul Rose, David Scudamore, Revd Bridget Smith, Michael Smith, Revd David Staples, Revd Robert Stapleton, Revd S. Tebbutt, Mrs Ann Toms, Peter Webb, Mrs Helen Westlake, Mrs Juliet Wilson, Revd Mervyn Wilson.

The Conference was organised by the Diocese of Peterborough, Council for the Countryside. If you would like further details about the work of the Council for the Countryside, please contact

The Secretary,
Mrs June Bernstein,
13 Main Street,
Earswold,
Rutland,
LE15 8EB.



the countryside urban models of living, working and praying. Line dancing, the fastest growing leisure time activity, brings together scores of people but as individuals - lines of solitary people each in their own individual space. Sociologists use this as an example of the decline in corporate activities such as "team" hobbies - sports, MU, choirs and church going. People no longer seem to need personal relationships and the communication revolution has changed lives. But we are set in this world, called to proclaim a Gospel which is all about transforming community. (The reason why urban evangelical churches do so well in towns is because they are all about proclaiming individual salvation!) Post industrialist people are consumerist about their spirituality. Increased mobility has favoured the eclectic church. Look at St Giles and St Matthews in Northampton - at opposite ends of C of E churchmanship, with congregations of about 250 on Sunday mornings, but something like 63% of their congregations drive in from outside parishes. Loyalty to the parish church is no longer an issue for them.

The church has a management problem. What do we do with our resources? Our Christian task, as defined by Robert Warren is: (1) to proclaim the Good News (2) to baptise, nurture and teach (3) to right injustices and guard the integrity of creation (4) to help those in need (5) to proclaim the cosmological focus of the Kingdom. We must engage in this task with what Charles Handy, the management guru, calls the E factor - excitement, energy, enthusiasm. Are our churches places of transforming encounter or are they no more nor less than other places of community identity such as village halls, pubs and schools? That is what liturgy is all about. Proclaiming the Good News must be the bench-mark by which we measure our weekly parish liturgy. I leave you with three questions: (1) How do we respond to the findings of sociologists? (2) What are we doing to respond to the spiritual needs of society? (3) Do our church buildings enable transforming encounters?

Discussion after the talk.

A Fotheringhay parishioner, (pop. 100, visitors by the busload) said that it was difficult to make the church a place for a "transforming encounter" because people came for the historical interest... yet - the ultimate barrier to an encounter is a locked door and Fotheringhay is open. A MU member spoke firmly against the suggestion that MU was declining. It was changing and moving on. It was asserted that people do still like to gather and share special occasions in church, Remembrance Sunday, Harvest etc., these events and small Sunday congregations are both part of the scene. It was suggested that modern technology be put to use and incumbents provided with fax machines.

Reflection by the Chairman:

(1) Sociologists tend to oversimplify. The 18th and early 19th century was also the period of Wesley and the Evangelical Revival. Village life documented in diaries such as History of Myddle, 1680-1700, by Richard Gough, Paupers and Pig Killers by William Holland, Diary of Thomas Turner 1754-1765, do not support the authoritarian thesis. (2) There are differences of individualism. Village characters were the product of belonging to a given community. The sturdy British individualism was also secured by religion. The line dancer is probably working out his or her position in society at a fairly basic level. Rural and urban styles and opportunities still differ. (3) On transforming encounter. Stephen's thought pressed for an either/or, but there is a need both for the moment of encounter and the drip feed of services faithfully sustained. (4) It is important for a few to maintain worship in such a way that others can join in.

FILLING IN FOR THE REVD ANTHONY HODGSON

Revd Hodgson had been going to speak on three matters - private prayer, permitted

variations and occasionals. Private prayer
There is much evidence of this in church visitors' books although there has been significant decline in the practice in any formal sense, alone or with the family. Children asked when they pray will speak of school assemblies unless they go to church or Sunday school. Permitted variations The Liturgical Commission has published a booklet setting these out. In fact the incumbent has great freedom, as has the diocesan. The important thing is for priest and people to move happily together even though one must lead. Rural congregations are not averse to change but they do not like it imposed on them and their time scale is longer. Occasionals are needed for special occasions. The Spirit cannot be contained in one form of words or liturgy. Agricultural services are recommended. Several present had held Rogation walks. We hold Lammas in a village with few farmers and a majority of incomers. All take part including children, everyone brings a gift (first fruits) which is offered and becomes refreshment afterwards. We recall in the Eucharist God's offering of his first born and in an inward way our offerings are caught up in his offering.

Discussion after the talk

This related practices in different places, a need for imagination, energy and flexibility as well as steadiness and tradition. Question: Is the idyll of rural life a fantasy, or does it contain a seed that will grow into a fresh living thing in favourable soil?

LOCAL AGENDA 21 - David Scudamore

David Scudamore is the Assistant Director of Planning and Transportation, Northants County Council, with a responsibility for enabling the Northants Environmental Forum to be set up and function. Origins: The Brundtland Report in 1987 was concerned with the environment and with rich and poor nations. At the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the need was affirmed for Sustainable

Development defined as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs". This requires an Agenda for the 21st Century. (1) Development to be sustainable at all levels (2) All people should have a say in decisions. (3) All social groups in communities should be involved. (4) The split between north and south, rich and poor nations of the world, must be considered. (5) Energy use must be reduced. (6) Bio-diversity is to be protected. Our government was one of the signatories at Rio. Those six points will if agreed bring about (1) social equity (2) economic security (3) care for the natural environment. In 1994 the government took this on board and passed on the responsibility to local government. For the county, the priorities were (1) to set their own house in order, producing leaflets re: (2) staff awareness (3) an audit of all services, recycling paper, saving electricity etc., (4) budgeting (5) policy integration by having yearly reviews of all committees because when policies are made, other people are affected. In terms of external practice the new approach is illustrated by the Crick case. Money becomes available from the Crick Development for the benefit of the local villages. We have asked them for suggestions and see our role as facilitators. Under the old consultation we, as experts, would decide and then have discussion locally.

In the discussion which followed it was apparent that few had heard of Local Agenda 21, and those who had agreed that it was a difficult and new concept to grasp and hold. It concerns a number of principles which we are not in the habit of holding together and it places emphasis on process rather than consequence. Process models require faith that there will be a good outcome.

The Northants Environmental Forum is the county response. It was set up two years ago to raise awareness and encourage involvement. It has held three full forums - the first general, the second a debate on the use of the motor car, the most recent on the regeneration of town centres



ECTON HOUSE

According to an eighteenth century Northamptonshire antiquary, Bridges, Ecton House, originally the Rectory for the church of St. Mary Magdalene, was built in 1693 by Thomas Palmer, Rector, 'at the expense of above a thousand pounds'. It was later enlarged by the addition of two wings, one providing a 'handsome drawing room' and the other the kitchen premises, and an 'ornamental veranda' along the front of the house. In spite of later modernisation, the house we know today is substantially that enjoyed by the long succession of Palmers and their relations, the Whalleys, who served as patrons and incumbents of Ecton for close on two hundred years and whose arms appear in the stained glass window on the half-landing.

In the eighteenth century two famous guests visited the house. The painter Hogarth was a frequent visitor and many of his drawings and paintings hung in the Rectory, among them a painting of John Palmer, Barrister of the Inner Temple and Patron of Ecton in the first half of the eighteenth century, which went to America in 1976 and is now at Yale, and the self portrait of the artist with his pug dog which now hangs in the Tate. Reference to Hogarth's connection with the village is made in the painting which hangs in the dining room, where he can be discovered, accompanied by dog, at the left hand side of the picture.

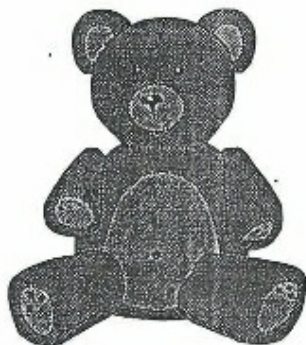
The second notable visitor was Benjamin Franklin, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States of America. In 1758, while staying in London to negotiate with the Penn brothers, the Pennsylvanian Proprietors, on a question of taxation, he took the chance to visit Ecton, which had been the home of his family for more than three hundred years. Although his own father, before emigrating, had been a soap and candle manufacturer in Banbury, his ancestors had had a freehold estate of about thirty acres in the village, where they carried on the trade of village blacksmith. Going through the parish records, Franklin discovered to his great interest that he was the youngest son of the youngest son for five generations. He was less interested to discover that the family had no coat of arms and later took steps to acquire one for himself, only refusing his sister permission to stamp it on the soap she manufactured! Franklin family graves can be seen in the churchyard.

In modern times it became impracticable to continue to use the house as the Rectory and in 1968, after suitable alterations and adaptation, it became the Conference and Retreat House for the Diocese of Peterborough. It was officially opened by the Duchess of Gloucester, now Princess Alice, on the 9th of May in that year and since then thousands of people have found here a place of refreshment and spiritual renewal.

Jean Morrison, 1991

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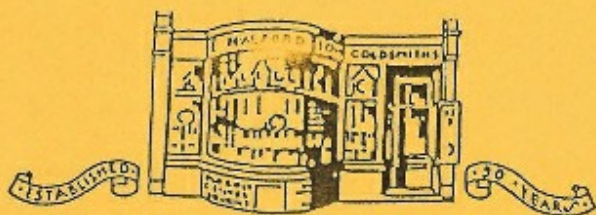
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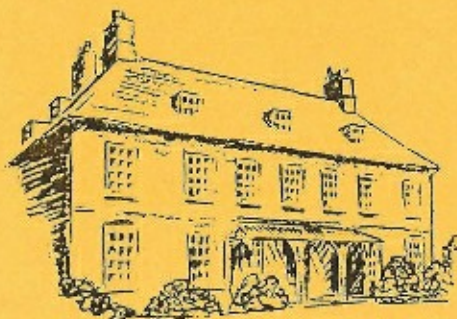
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ECTON HOUSE

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Bless its staff and all who use it for
retreats and conferences: may they know
your presence and the power of your
love, and have grace in their hearts,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

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