

THE CLARION

The Magazine of The Parish of St Mary The Boltons

AUGUST 2004

Memories of Russia

Seeing the beautiful exhibition 'Russian Landscape in the Age of Tolstoy' currently at the National Gallery, revived so many memories of our river trip and brought home to me the unchanging nature of the Russian landscape. There are depicted the same vast stretches of unbroken forest that we slid silently past hour after hour, the same empty landscape without cultivation or indeed any sign of human habitation beyond the occasional clusters of two or three apparently vacant wooden houses. The overwhelming impression is of the sheer vastness of the country.

Tourism has its drawbacks – the crowds, the queues, the commercialization – yet how could we otherwise experience within a few days the clustered gold domes of the Kremlin, the rain swept expanse of Red Square, the extraordinary over-decorated churches of Uglich and Yaroslav, the wide white empty squares of Kostroma, the wooden churches of Kizhi adrift in the empty plains, or those huge deserted monasteries speaking so eloquently of the holy Russia of the past?

One of my strongest impressions was the contrast between the churches preserved however carefully as museums, and those few churches functioning as places of worship. A striking example was the church of Christ the King in Moscow, meticulously reconstructed within a mere five years on its original site which had in Soviet times supported a swimming pool. The place seemed strangely devoid of any feeling.

By contrast, the little church of Our Lady of Kazan in Red Square (restored after decades of housing a public lavatory) was filled by ordinary people venerating the icons in the traditional way, I was touched to see our guide, a man in his twenties, doing just this, and a grandfather teaching a toddler exactly how to make the sign of the cross. How has this faith survived seven decades of violent anti-Christian propaganda?

In St Petersburg I had expected so much of the Hermitage, but sadly the dense crowds made seeing the pictures virtually impossible. However, nothing could detract from the magnificence of the building, the brilliant ceilings and the splendour of the main staircase. It was a relief to leave the crowds and walk quietly through the streets beside the canals absorbing the atmosphere of this amazing city.

Fortunately the Russian Museum was not crowded and we were able to enjoy the rooms of icons peacefully.

My most vivid memory of St Petersburg is of the famous 'white night'; emerging from the ballet at 11.00pm we found the whole sky intensely white, not just light but white, shredding an unearthly white light over the whole city. Another more mundane memory is of the vertiginous depth of the deepest escalator imaginable plunging into the metro. Russia is in every way a land of extremes.

A great bonus was the warmth and companionship within the group which grew with the passing of days, and was crystallised in our periods of quiet reflection and prayer together. We are deeply indebted to Leo and Bill for their forward planning, preparation and guidance, and to Gerald for his constant care for every member of the party and for his continuous inspiration.

Anne Garten

Congratulations to the Gardening Group

For the second year running St. Mary's has won First Prize in the Church Section of the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea's Gardens Competition. Many thanks to Audrey Pine and her team for all their hard work in helping to create such a beautiful setting and for putting the church on the map yet again.

New Area Dean of Chelsea

Congratulations to The Revd Rob Gillion who has been appointed Area Dean in succession to Gerald by the Bishop of Kensington. Rob is Vicar of St Simon Zelotes & St Saviour's, Walton Street, at the Knightsbridge end of the deanery. Rob was well known at St Mary's when he was living at the old St. Peter's Vicarage in Cranley Gardens. Area Deans are a kind of middle person between the parishes and the diocese. Please keep Rob in your prayers as he takes up his appointment on 1 September.

Friends of Brompton Cemetery Open Day Saturday 31 July, 10.30am – 5.00pm

The cemetery will be alive with activities and events from organ recitals to birds of prey and Peter

Rabbit reading from 'his' books for children; displays of Victorian funerary and burial records; tours of the cemetery and catacombs, stalls and refreshments. Please come and support the work of enhancing the cemetery for public enjoyment into the future.

Further information 020 7351 9936

Revised Parish Schedule after the Summer

Monday Silent Prayer at 8.30am
will cease for the time being
Morning Prayer daily will be at 8.30am
from 1 September
Sunday School begins again on 12 September
All Age Worship 2/3 October - Harvest
and 11/12 December – The Nativity
Mother & Toddlers on Mondays at 9.00am
begins again on 13 September
Bible Study Group fortnightly
resumes on Mondays from 13 September
Friday Lunches and the Tradition Group
currently suspended

Ivy Rogers is moving and the Tradition Group is now quite small so it may be that has reached the end of its natural life. If people would like to continue perhaps those involved could see who else in the congregation is interested in looking at the relationship between the arts and the Christian faith. If Friday lunches are to resume then we need to have a committed team who can provide simple meals of hot soups, bread, cheese and fruit in the winter, a light salad in the summer, and hospitality. Any offers? Please contact the Parish Office.

Country Fayre in aid of The Children's Society Saturday 26 June 2004

Results

<u>Stall</u>	<u>Profit</u>
BBQ	165
Bouncy Castle & Pony Rides	(13)
Bric a Brac	430 (<i>Saturday</i>)
	112 (<i>Sunday</i>)
Cakes	339
Face Painting	14
Ice Creams	138
Pimms	485
Plants	236
Raffle	449
Teas	164
Tombola	386
Toys	368
Badge Making	13
Name the Bear	35

Hook A Duck	89
<u>Promised Donations</u>	3800 (<i>inc Gift Aid</i>)
(<u>Expenses</u>)	1600)
Expected Total	5610

Items left over from the Bric a Brac and Toy Stalls went to the Notting Hill Charity Shop on the Fulham Road

Thanks for a great effort!

Good-Bye to the De Dumasts

Gilles, Lyvia, Max, Louis and Alice packed up their home at the end of June and have moved to Paris. We wish them every happiness in the new chapter of their lives.

Lyvia and the children made a wonderful contribution to the Sunday School and they will be much missed at St Mary's.

Help to ensure that Pension Credit is given where Pension Credit is due

Pension Credit provides extra money for pensioners who have only a modest income. Many already claim it, but some do not and are living 'below the poverty line'.

You may feel that it is the Government's responsibility to ensure every eligible pensioner receives Pension Credit, and it has nothing to do with the Church. But Andrew Smith, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions admits that only two-thirds of eligible pensioners may claim Pension Credit. And that means there could be pensioners known to you who are not receiving the extra money which would help relieve financial stress. So please pass on this information about Pension Credit to any pensioner who might benefit from it.

For some years, most people aged 60 or over, with low income and savings of less than £6,000 have been able to claim the full Minimum Income Guarantee. This now guarantees a weekly income of £105.45 for single people, or £160.95 if you have a partner.

The new part of Pension Credit gives extra money to those aged 65 or over if their total weekly income* is less than £144.25 for single people or £211.50 if you have a partner. Indeed a pensioner may be able to get Pension Credit if his/her weekly income is more than these amounts if the pensioner or his/her partner:

- is a severely disabled person or
- looks after a person who is severely disabled or
- has certain housing costs e.g. mortgage interest payments.

* 'Weekly income' includes pensions, certain benefits (but not Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Housing Benefit, or Council Tax Benefit) and earnings from a job.. It also includes a 'notional' amount for savings: i.e. not the interest actually received, but an amount calculated on the basis of £1 per week for every £500 or part of £500 over £6000 (or £10,000 for those permanently living in a care home).

If a pensioner is eligible for just a small amount of Pension Credit, it is important to claim it, because it can lead to being eligible for further help. To claim Pension Credit: telephone FREEPHONE 0800 99 1234.

Christian Council on Ageing
The Worlds We Live In
St Paul's Cathedral September 2004

The Archbishop of Canterbury together with experts drawn from across the world will address some of the major ethical issues of our times:

- How should the world be governed?
- Is there an alternative to global capitalism?
- Environment and humanity: friends or foes?
- Is humanity killing its self?

The panels will bring the Archbishop into dialogue with viewpoints from, amongst others, the State Department in Washington, the front line in Balkan negotiations, the pioneers of micro credit in Bangladesh, environmental activism in the midst of civil war in El Salvador, and a missionary hospital in Nepal.

Full details of the distinguished list of participants, as well as times and dates of this exciting series of dialogues at St Paul's Cathedral this September can be found in the leaflet at the back of the church. Admission is free.

An opportunity for smaller groups to consider and discuss the issues raised in the Archbishop's dialogues will be held on Tuesday evenings during October and November.

Connecting with the Global Economy:
A Christian Exploration
8-10 October 2004

A Christian response to the Global Economy this course is for clergy, business people and others who are committed to issues of social justice and have some familiarity with these issues.

Perceiving Aright:
Humanity and the Global Environment
30 November - 2 December 2004

A foundational course in theology underpinning human responsibility to the environment, providing a spiritual and theological framework, tools of

ethical analysis and the understanding to interact intelligently with our environment – a response to the environment in the light of recent Old Testament scholarship. For clergy and lay people.

For full details contact St Paul's Institute on 020 7489 1011 insitute@stpaulscathedral.org.uk

Items for inclusion in the September edition of 'The Clarion' to the Parish Office please by Monday 23 August please.