

THE CLARION

The Magazine of The Parish of St Mary The Boltons

APRIL 2009

The Empty Tomb: The Triumph of Easter

In his account of the first Easter morning, the writer of St. Mark's Gospel (*one of the Easter Day accounts for this liturgical year (B) is from Mark's Gospel*) tells us that Mary Magdalene and the women accompanying her went to Jesus' tomb expecting nothing unusual. Jesus had died the previous day and his body hastily laid in a tomb. The women went carrying spices, expecting to prepare the body for burial and their immediate thoughts were practical, wondering how the stone that guarded the tomb could be rolled away. But all their concerns and expectations were confounded when they arrived; the stone had been rolled away and Jesus' body was not there. Instead there was an angel who told them that Jesus had risen. The women fled the tomb in fear and astonishment.

Now, some two thousand years later the empty tomb no longer frightens and astonishes us. We are so familiar with the story take it is easy to take it for granted. We forget the force and power of the event, forgetting that through Jesus' resurrection God's creative and life-giving power broke through the human limits of the world to create new life, no longer dominated by our human frailty, failings and failures, emptiness and death, because their ultimate power has been defeated.

Easter is the triumph of the empty tomb; where death should be, there death is no longer. As we celebrate this triumph on Easter Day so we are challenged to live into the new life that Jesus offers us through his resurrection. Yet in so many instances it is hard to see and live into the new life that has been opened up to us. We continue to live in a world blighted by suffering and violence, by inequality and exploitation, fear and hatred. However, that is only one side of life. We also live in a world where there is healing and gentleness, beauty and delight, courage and love that reach out to restore and reconcile. It is when we begin to live in this way that we begin to live into and understand what is meant by the new life offered to us through Jesus' resurrection. This new life is often not easy or straightforward; more often than not it is a challenge, but a challenge that is rewarding, not just for us but also for others.

As we once more celebrate Easter may we be astonished by the new life offered to us through Jesus' resurrection and may we be bold enough to live it wholeheartedly and most importantly, joyfully.
Ginny Thomas

St. Mary's Stewardship and Financial Campaign 2009-2012:

Putting Yourself in the Picture: Give, Commit and Receive!

Every three years St. Mary's holds a financial campaign to encourage parishioners to make or renew their financial commitment towards the costs of maintaining St. Mary's and to explore ways members of the congregation can contribute to the life of the church. This year our aim is to increase our annual giving by £40,000 a year – an enormous challenge, especially in this financial climate. This amount takes into account an increase in general running costs, staff salaries and the stipend for the associate vicar. With this edition of The Clarion there is a quiz entitled 'Money Matters at St. Mary's' which gives some indication of our running costs. Please take part in the quiz: there will be a bottle of champagne for the winner.

The campaign will run from April 25th to May 17th and three special events are planned.

Saturday April 25th: Sponsored Walk Around the Parish: 2.30-3.30pm.

How well do you know our parish? Do you know its boundaries, who lived here, what happens here? Come and take part in a sponsored walk on Saturday 25th April, starting from St. Mary's at 2.30pm. The walk will take approximately an hour and will be accompanied by a quiz which will include questions on people who've lived and worked in the parish. The walk will be followed by refreshments back at church when the answers to the quiz will be given. Details of the route, the quiz and sponsorship forms are available from the parish office. Please join us and encourage friends and family to sponsor you or take part.

Thursday May 7th: A Drinks Evening with Evan Davis, Economics Editor of the BBC. 7-9pm

Evan Davis will give a talk on the current state of the economy and how he sees it. Since 2001 he has been Economics Editor of the BBC and contributes to some of the highest-profile news programmes on BBC radio and television, particularly the 'Ten O'Clock News' on BBC1 and 'Today' on Radio 4. He also presents 'The Bottom Line' a weekly discussion programme on Radio 4 and 'Dragons Den', the BBC2 business reality show.

The evening will start with a drinks reception in the church followed by a talk by Evan. There will then be a short question and answer session with business travel writer Adam Coulter in which guests will be

encouraged to quiz Evan. The evening will end with Evan mixing and mingling with guests and answering questions.

Tickets : £20 to include refreshments.

Saturday May 9th: Family Fun Day 2.30 –5pm

This will take place in the Church Hall and is aimed mainly at families with young children – although older children are also welcome! The afternoon will consist of lots of fun activities and stalls for the children such as face painting, a treasure hunt and a ‘Tree of Life’.

The ‘Tree of Life’ will be adorned with donated prizes with a minimum value, which means no-one will go home empty-handed and you could win a great prize such as dinner for two in a local restaurant.

The ticket price includes a glass of Pimms and refreshments for the children.

Tickets are £5 per person, or £20 for families with more than 2 children.

Adam Coulter

Thomas Traherne: a little-known metaphysical poet

The name *metaphysical* has been given to those 17th century poets who wrote on spiritual matters. The most famous is John Donne (1572-1631), Dean of St Paul’s, celebrated for his sermons as well as for his ‘Divine Sonnets’, although probably better known for his early love poems. George Herbert (1593-1633), a parish priest, is well known to churchgoers through his hymns: ‘King of Glory, King of Peace’, ‘Teach me, my God and King’, ‘Let all the world in every corner sing’ and his version of Psalm 23, ‘The God of love my shepherd is’. Henry Vaughan (1621-1695) was a doctor who fought for the King in the Civil War and published two volumes of religious verse that include that extraordinary poem, ‘I saw Eternity the other night’.

Much less well known than these is Thomas Traherne (1636?-1674). The son of a shoemaker, he went to Oxford, became a parish priest, and later domestic chaplain to Sir Orlando Bridgeman at whose house in Teddington he spent his last years. He published very little, and nothing of interest during his life. It was not until the end of the 19th century that his ‘Centuries of Meditations’ came to light. Since then more and more manuscripts have been discovered and authenticated, the last as recently as 1997.

In his meditations, Traherne rejoices in the infinite nature of God’s love for us:

God is goodness infinitely
communicative. God is love –
infinitely delighted to see us
happy. God is wisdom and
delighteth to give us all his
treasures, in the wisest manner.

(The Third Century 43)

The sense of God’s love illuminating human life imbues all of Traherne’s poetry. He marvels not only at the joy given to people, but at the miracle of existence itself:

A stranger here

Strange things doth meet, strange glories see;
Strange treasures lodged in this fair world
appear,

Strange all, and new to me.

But that they mine should be, who nothing
was,

That strangest is of all, yet brought to pass.

(The Salutation)

In early childhood, before the senses are fully developed, it seems to Traherne that the whole being, the soul, is an eye to take in existence.

Then was my soul my only all to me,

A living endless eye,

Far wider than the sky

Whose power, whose act, whose essence was
to see.

(The Preparative)

The child is in direct communication with his surroundings, which leads him straight to the Creator.

I felt a vigour in my sense

That was all spirit, I within did flow

With seas of life like wine;

I nothing in the world did know,

But ‘twas divine.

(Wonder)

This intimate contact with everything around him naturally brings the child intense joy.

Joy, pleasure, beauty, kindness, glory, love,

Sleep, day, life, light,

Peace, melody, my sight,

My ears and heart did fill, and freely move.

All that I saw did me delight.

(Eden)

The joy in life that he feels so keenly naturally leads him to the source of that joy.

The sun is but a little spark of
his infinite love: the sea is but one
drop of his goodness. But what flames
of love ought that spark to kindle
in your soul: what seas of affection
ought to flow for that drop in your
bosom!

(The Second Century 14)

To explain how all the beauty and joy of creation points to an ultimate cause, Traherne uses the image of a fountain and the spring that is its source.

To see a fountain is a blessed thing.

It is to see the King

Of glory face to face: But yet the end,
The glorious wondrous end is more;
And yet the fountain there we comprehend,
The spring we there adore.
(The Vision)

When he looks back to his childhood, the poet remembers the intense happiness he felt and records this in a series of short poems entitled 'Innocence'.

A joyful sense and purity
Is all I can remember.
The very night to me was bright,
'Twas summer in December.

As an adult, he is forever grateful for these memories, 'for this I daily kneel'. This leads him to the inescapable conclusion, 'I must become a child again'. Traherne calls to mind the purity of early childhood and the rapture this brings, before adult experience has made itself felt. In the poem 'News from a foreign country came' he recalls how he used to imagine that great riches lay far away in distant lands, until he realised where 'all the treasures of the world' truly lie.

The glorious soul that was the king
Made to possess them, did appear
A small and little thing!

The poem, 'Shadows in the water', beautifully describes the alternative world seen in reflections; this leads him to consider the 'unknown joys' he will one day discover.

To which I shall, when that thin skin
Is broken, be admitted in.

The delight Traherne finds in nature leads him to the certainty that he 'must needs adore the Holy One' (The Vision). He feels that creation springs from God's love.

God is present by love alone.
By love alone He is great and
glorious.

(The Second Century 50)

Therefore we ourselves should endeavour to enter into the divine experience of love.

We ought therefore above all
things to get acquainted with
love. For love is the root and
foundation of nature: love is
the soul of life and crown of
rewards.

(The Second Century 62)

Anne Garten

Thursday Lunch Meeting, 12 March

Another successful meeting took place on 12 March in the Thursday monthly lunch series, when Graham Caldbeck was the guest speaker. Thirty people were entertained and much impressed with Graham's personal account of his early musical experiences. These began with his request for a piano at age six, which was provided for him a year later. Piano lessons were shared with other students so that he had early experience of performing in front of others. Then as an antidote to asthma and hay fever, he was asked to sing, and from eight years onwards moved through a succession of choirs, an early church choir providing welcome income of two shillings for wedding services, of which there were many. At 16 he became an assistant organist at a local church, playing at his sister's wedding, and was soon in charge of a choir with an age range of 11 to 85. Gaining a choral scholarship to Trinity College Cambridge, he missed his first service due (he said!) to failure of his alarm clock. A replacement was duly presented to him by the Dean of Chapel (Harry Williams).

Graham concluded with references to singing experiences with a wide range of conductors and performers at the top of their profession, among others, the Cambridge University Musical Society under David Willcocks, the London Bach Choir, teaching at Cranleigh School, appointments at Guildford and Salisbury Cathedrals and as Director of Music at Stockport Grammar School. He described as one real highlight performing in the *Dream of Gerontius*, conducted by Benjamin Britten, with Peter Pears singing.

A wonderfully funny and affectionate account of rich musical days, all of which reinforced in us the sense of great good fortune that we have Graham as our Director of Music at St Mary's. We hope for further instalments of such an interesting musical life anon!
Arthur Tait

What Easter means for me

One day, some years ago, I witnessed a resurrection in my sitting room. A friend, whose husband had died some 20 years earlier, told me again how guilty she felt at not having cared well for him on his last day. Indeed, she had nursed him at home for many months, but that day did not call the doctor and he died. She lived with the guilt of failure for the person she had loved most, and the thought of meeting him again caused her to be deeply ashamed.

At this point I asked my friend what her husband would say to her when they met. She sat for some minutes and I watched as clearly something momentous was going on inside her. 'It's alright... it's alright...' she finally said joyfully and with utter

astonishment and tears. She could feel her husband's simple acceptance without any blame.

It seems to me that unless the Bible has some relevance in our own lives, it remains a closed book. Sudden insights that affect how we think and act have resonance with stories and episodes in the Bible. The resurrection is a particularly strong event. It may be a forgiveness of a wrong done or the guilt of an imagined wrong that may suddenly be experienced as forgiven. It may be a deep truth about ourselves, some relationship, or some way of being in and with the world that comes to life. Or it may be some long-held opinion or possession that is seen in a new light, presenting as 'resurrections'. The event that my friend lived through is so similar to the resurrection story that it can hardly have been anything else than as earth-shattering for her as it was for the people on the 'real' Easter morning. My friend had clung on to something, and at that moment was able to let go – like Mary being told not to cling on to Jesus. The stone of guilt and shame rolled away from her secret tomb once she had seen inside it. My friend left me, looking like a new person; she literally was 'transformed' by the experience.

There are 'big' resurrections, as my friend experienced, but also many little daily events that make the world and our lives different, sometimes just for a moment. Nature presents us with such events every day.

One such example in nature is a tiny flower, *Soldanella alpina*. According to Wikipedia (for lack of a better book about alpine flowers) they are called snowbell in English, and 'grow in damp pastures and rocky landscapes from 500-3,000 m above sea level, usually in hollows that hold snow long into the summer. They typically have a basal rosette of simple, orbicular leaves 1-5 cm wide, with the flower stalks arising from the centre of the rosette, each stalk bearing 1-6 white to violet flowers'. What is amazing about these delicate little flowers is that they make a perfectly round hole in the snow to push through and blossom. The growing process of the plant gives off just enough warmth to melt the snow. To see these fragile little flowers have so much creative energy in them to pierce the elements brings forth astonishment and wonder, and they are testimony to the power of new life and rebirth.

Butterflies are symbols of the soul, and I mention just two situations where they were powerful symbols for me. Both of them are related to the death of special people. The first of these took place some months after a very significant person in my life had died. I was

on holiday, and one day climbed a small hill, feeling particularly sad at the loss of this person. I sat down on this hill and immediately a peacock butterfly came and settled on the grass beside me. I skipped down the hill, a different person.

The other event was not so long ago. I was on my way to the funeral of a person who I called my 'London mother'. She had lived in Shoreditch. As I came out of Liverpool Street tube station to walk the short distance to her home, on a red brick building there was a bright yellow butterfly; I could not have missed it. It spoke of the soul of my 'mother' to be at peace – and myself with it.

It is not just the signs of the returning seasons and the new growth of spring that bring Easter alive for me, but it is the deep insights that the world of nature and my own understanding and connection with that world is at a visceral level, is shared, and always striving to make whole. It is the understanding that above and beyond explanations of an empty tomb and ghostly appearances, it is what we do with the Easter stories, which matters. It is the absolute 'it's alright' – the acceptance, inclusion, given-ness – towards us hat counts, and that in turn enables us to accept, include, and give: towards ourselves, the people and the world around us.

Verena Tschudin

Christian Aid Week at St Mary's; Supper Parties

Joanna Hackett, St Mary's Christian Aid rep, will be hosting two supper parties during Christian Aid Week. The dates are Wednesday 13 May and Saturday 16 May. The cost of the meal is £15 per person and there is a sign-up sheet at the back of church. Please come along to one of the evenings to help raise money for this important charity and to see friends and make new ones at St Mary's. Address: Flat 3, 300 Fulham Road, at 7.30pm.

If you would like to hold your own event in aid of Christian Aid, why not invite some friends or neighbours round for a meal or go to www.christianaid.org.uk for more inspiration in planning events. Joanna will happily collect any donations or monies raised and forward these to Christian Aid as part of St Mary's contribution.

If you are free during the day on Tuesday 12 May to help with the 'rattling of tins' at Gloucester Road underground station, Joanna would love to hear from you! Thank you.

Joanna Hackett, 07720 850 482

Old Friends

Tim, Jenny and Joseph Carter popped into Church on Sunday 22 February, and were delighted to find Church open for evening prayer. Tim was resident in the Church House flat 1988 to 1992 and was friends with Wilga Smart and Charles Dwight. He was a student at Heythrop College and finally got his PhD on Apollinarius of Laodicea. He sends many thanks to St Mary The Boltons

Summer Fair 2009

The St Mary The Boltons Summer Fair will be held this year on **Saturday 20 June 2009, 2.0pm – 5.0pm**. Please tell all your families, neighbours and friends.

The organising committee of Fiona Brown and Joanna Hackett would welcome any support you can offer, both on the day and in advance. Although donations cannot yet be accepted, pledges of support and promises of items now would be gratefully received. Please contact the committee via the Parish Office if you can help in any way.

Details are still to be finalised, but the stalls will include second-hand books, bric-à-brac, plants and raffles. We would also welcome help in stocking up the cake stall, which is always so popular (all homemade cakes, jams and marmalades gratefully received).

There will be more details in next month's Clarion.
Fiona Brown

Years Mind

Linda Beauchamp
Roy Denman
Vera Sloane
Alan Payne
Geoffrey Payne
Arthur Fell
Edward Mason
William Rogers
John Warwick
Karl-Hans Osbahr
Margaret Stubbs
Molly Kemm
John McLean
Gillian Brown
Jytte Lynner
Diana McLean
Claudine Allport
Michael Bryceson
Richard Barton
Jytte Mackenzie-Charrington
James Bolton-Dignam
Yvonne Madley
Sidney Perry

New Bishop of Kensington

On Wednesday 1 April at 7.00pm there will be a service of welcome for the Bishop, attended by the Bishop of London at St Mary Abbots. All welcome.

The Boltons Big Lunch *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* Sunday 19 July 2009 at 1pm

You will be hearing all about *The Big Lunch* across the media this month: the idea is that people up and down the country will simultaneously sit down to lunch together with their neighbours, as a simple but profound act of community. The hope is that some or all of the food we eat will be locally grown. The idea originated with Tim Smit at the Eden Project and Paul Twivy, now CEO of The Big Lunch.

David Shreeve sowed the seed at St Mary's when he came to preach on 1 February and it has fallen on fertile soil. *The Big Lunch* ties in very much with our concern to engage with and support our local community, especially with people who are lonely and isolated. The date falls at the culmination of the Earls Court Festival, so we are delighted that **The Boltons Big Lunch** is part of the Festival, and open to all. We hope that other *Big Lunches* may spring up locally too – the more the merrier!

We aim to have a festival feel to the lunch; the theme is *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*. It will be held outside if possible, inside if not.

Robin Arbuthnot and Hugh Beach, regular cooks of our monthly Sunday Lunch, have taken up the catering challenge and more details of the menu will be revealed in due course, but there will be a loaves and fishes theme. A small team consisting of Ruth Lampard, Leo Fraser-Mackenzie and Adam Coulter, as well as Robin and Hugh are working on the day. You have already heard from Leo about growing things, and you will be hearing more from us over the coming months.

We are catering for 150 people and want to keep a balance between the Church community and the wider community, so we will have up to 75 tickets available for Church members. We will need helpers too.

Tickets will be £2.00 each, and we are hoping for sponsorship to cover the costs of the lunch. At the end of lunch we will invite donations to support the St Mary's charitable giving.

How can you help?

We need green fingers - and wannabe home growers - young or old!

Please let Leo know what you can grow- see the March Clarion.

We need herbs: dill, basil, mint, chives parsley. If you want to grow something bigger, why not try potatoes or tomatoes in a grow bag on your patio – now is the time to start sowing/planting.

Do contact me or any of the team if you can help or have any questions

Ruth Lampard

Our New Bishop

Our new Bishop, the Rt Rev Paul Gavin Williams was consecrated as Bishop at St Paul's Cathedral on 25 March 2009. Bishop Williams, aged 40, comes from the Oxford Diocese, where he led one of its largest churches, St James' Gerrards Cross with Fulmer in Buckinghamshire, since 1999.

Having trained for ministry at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, Bishop Williams originally served in the Diocese of London at St James', Muswell Hill, from 1992 to 1995 before spending four years as Associate Vicar at Christ Church, Clifton, in Bristol Diocese.

Bishop Williams is married to Sarah and they have three boys, aged 5, 8 and 9. He is enthusiastic about all sport, especially football and sailing, and is keen on fell-walking and English choral music.

60-second interview with our new Bishop

Q. Who inspired you most to go into the church?

A. Many different people have contributed, but especially my parents.

Q. What is your favourite book of the Old Testament?

A. The Book of Psalms touches every human situation and emotion.

Q. What is your favourite book of the New Testament?

A. Paul's letter to the Ephesians provides a truly inspiring panorama of the whole gospel.

Q. What is the best advice you've even been given?

A. The Joy of the Lord is your strength!

Q. What is the best advice you've given?

A. Take a closer look at Jesus – and talk to him.

Q. What is your favourite hymn?

A. Right now it would be 'Rejoice the Lord is King!'

Q. What is your favourite carol?

A. O little town of Bethlehem.

Q. What is your favourite service in the Christian calendar?

A. They all have their own beauty and create wonder – Good Friday and Easter Sunday always draw me back to a place of surrender and celebration.

Q. If you could have met Jesus, what would you have said to him?

A. Thank you for loving me.

Q. What is your favourite book?

A. Just read 'To kill a mocking bird' – unsettling and inspiring. Too many favourite books!

Q. What is your favourite piece of music?

A. I enjoy mainly English Choral music and the best contemporary worship.

Q. What do you like to do in your spare time?

A. Spending time with my family, trying to have as much fun as possible.

Q. What's the worst job you've ever had?

A. I have enjoyed every job. All jobs have elements that are more challenging!

Q. What do you believe is the Church's main challenge for the next 5 years?

A. The Church's main challenge has not changed in 2000 years and that is to bring the hope and presence of Christ alive for modern people.

ST. MARY THE BOLTONS

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES 2009

Palm Sunday 5 April	8.00am Said Eucharist 10.30am Eucharist with Palm Procession and Passion Gospel
Monday 6 April	7.00pm Said Eucharist with meditation
Tuesday 7 April	12 noon Said Eucharist with meditation
Wednesday 8 April	7.00pm Said Eucharist with meditation
Maundy Thursday 9 April	7.30pm Sung Eucharist with Foot Washing followed by Vigil until midnight
Good Friday 10 April	10.30am Children's Service: the Easter story followed by refreshments 12 noon to 2pm Stabat Mater by Pergolesi with prayers and meditation. Ann de Renais (soprano) and Andrew Radley (countertenor) 2.15pm Solemn Good Friday Liturgy

Holy Saturday 11 April 8.00pm Easter Vigil with bonfire and refreshments
Easter Day 12 April 8.00 am Said Eucharist
10.30am Sung Parish Eucharist with Easter Egg Hunt

**Parish Pilgrimage 2009
To Winchester Cathedral and
Mottisfont Abbey, Saturday 30 May 2009**

We are having a one day pilgrimage this year and it should be a very good event. If you have not already signed up to join us there is still time and the price is coming down all the time! At present the cost is £47 per person, only £40 if you are a member of the National Trust. If we get another five people the cost goes down to £42 per person, only £35 if you belong to National Trust (don't forget to bring your card with you on the day). We have booked a 49 seater coach and the cost will go down even further the more people who join us.

We plan to leave St Mary's at 9.0am for Winchester Cathedral with its spectacular architecture and longest medieval nave in Europe. We will have our own Eucharist with Ginny celebrating in the Lady Chapel, then a guided tour covering the main history, art, architecture and stories of the Cathedral. It will

include Jane Austen's grave and memorial, a brief visit to the Crypt to view Antony Gormley's *Sound II* and the Epiphany Chapel to see the Burne-Jones windows. We will then be refreshed by a soup and sandwich lunch in the Garden Marquee (included) From 2.0pm there will be a rehearsal of a Welsh male voice choir in the Nave, which those who prefer to relax a little can enjoy if they don't wish further exploration of the Cathedral.

At 2.30pm our coach leaves for the short journey to Mottisfont Abbey where we can spend a couple of hours.

This handsome house, built on the 12th-century remains of an Augustinian priory, stands amid sweeping lawns next to the River Test, Brown trout wallow in its fast-flowing, clear waters and the tranquil lawns alongside are dotted with majestic plane trees. Mottisfont's famous walled gardens – home to the National Collection of Old-fashioned roses (hopefully coming into bloom by 30 May) – are a pleasure to visit at any time of the year. The house contains a stunning drawing room, decorated in the *trompe l'oeil* style by Rex Whistler in 1938, as well as Derek Hill's collection of early 20th-century art.

We should be back at St Mary's no later than 7.0pm. Do sign up and join the Pilgrimage,

**Concert at St Mary The Bolton's
Saturday 4 April 7.30pm**

**Requiem
By**

Michael Hayden

Mozart Motets **Schubert** Zum Sanctus
Haydn Insanae et vanae Curae

Hanover Choir

Conductor **Huw Morgan**

Soloists **Alexandra Kidgell, Helen Bruce,
Jake White, Edward Elias**

Organ **Michael Bonaventure**

Admission £8 Concessions £6

Contributions for the May Clarion should be sent in to the church office by 20 April