

LEADER RODNEY TAYLOR

What an ironical title! The Leader for October 2006? What Leader? Who is the leader? Is there a leader? We had our wonderful 'Salute to Brian Leathard', organised with style and panache by Michael Bunce. There were contributions from more than 25 people talking about Brian and his ministry, his life and all sorts of memorable stories. We had music from the children's choir, some pieces from Bach's French Suite played on the organ by Ash Charles, insights into life in the vicarage, and much else.

The party that followed was magnificent, and totally in the spirit of one of the things that Brian values - eating and drinking together, sharing our meal; so much a part of Biblical tradition.

Brian's last service on the following Sunday was packed - we ran out of hymn books! Again there was music - from St James' Players, who almost filled the South Aisle; from the children's choir with some very talented accompaniment by young musicians; from the choir augmented by some visiting voices, both past and from Concordia. And afterwards we went to the hall to thank Brian for his 17 years of ministry at St James', to thank Brian, Ramani and Anusha for all that they have done and been in the parish through those years, and to wish them every happiness in their new life in Chelsea. There were hugs, there were kisses, and there were tears. Then, from Holy Cross 1989 to Holy Cross 2006, Brian's ministry here in Hampton Hill was concluded, and he moves on to be Rector of Chelsea.

Brian's last sermon was based, amongst other things, on a text from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, Chapter XII: 'Begin at the beginning...and go on till you come to the end, then stop.' By the time you read this, he will no longer be our vicar. He began at the beginning, and went on to the end, and then he stopped. But we don't stop there. Not at all. What he has been to us over these 17 years doesn't stop. We will all personally and collectively carry forward what he has been to us and given to us. It is now part of what we are individually, and as a parish. That is what we shall carry with us on our journey ahead, though the interregnum and to our next incumbent.

So, where is the Leader for October 2006? That is a question that a lot of people have been asking me, not just the editorial

sub-committee of *The Spire*. Brian will be instituted by the Bishop and inducted by the Archdeacon at St Luke's, Chelsea on Thursday 5 October at 2000 - all are welcome and a coach from St James' is being organised. Julie was instituted and inducted at All Saint's, Hampton on 5 September. So, where is the Leader for October 2006? And November, and December, and so on until whenever? Where is the Leader?

We are now in the interregnum - the time between one reign and the next. It is an interval, a pause, a vacancy; a time to think, to pray, to regroup, to consolidate, to be together and to work together. But it is also a time in which life goes on. It is a time in which we can draw strength and inspiration from each other and all that we have from the past, and continue to move forward. We are not a rudderless ship. We have power and direction, fuelled by all that we have gained in the last 17 years and which we are going to bring to the coming years.

You will see that at the top of this page, in place of the usual cheery photograph of Brian or Julie, is our parish logo, the new style symbol of St James' Church. It consists of three overlapping and intertwining circles. These can have whatever meaning

you like but they go round and round without ending, and they are all around St James' Church. They represent us, this parish, its people; they are a symbol of our collectiveness, our inclusivity, our strength, as we go forward into the next stage of our development. Our Leader for October 2006 and for the months to come is **us**. All of us, however we contribute to the life of the parish; we are all the ones who are leading together. Not just the churchwardens, though heaven knows we have our work cut out for us; not just the PCC; not even those who quietly keep things flowing smoothly, but all of us. As Brian quoted in his last leader: 'For everything there is a season.' For us together, this is the season to lead. We, the parish, are the leader, as we prepare for a new incumbent and Vicar of Hampton Hill.



What Brian has been to us over the past 17 years doesn't stop now

October's saint chose the harsh conditions of India for missionary work that ultimately cost him his life

Henry was born in 1781 in Truro where his father was a surveyor. His mother died while he was a baby and he was raised by an elder sister. At school he 'lacked application' in every subject except classics, but still won a place at Cambridge. Once there he applied himself so energetically that he graduated top of his year.

It was while he was at college that the influence of his devout sister, the Evangelical preaching of Charles Simeon and the death of his father worked together to move him from nominal Christianity to that total consecration which Evangelicals held to be necessary to Christian perfection. He promptly offered himself for mission work in the East.

Given the tendency of his family to tuberculosis and his intensely introspective and self-critical personality, Henry was hardly the obvious candidate for a life of solitary labour in harsh conditions. But at the age of 24, with the support of members

of the Clapham Sect, he was appointed first chaplain to the East India Company. It was not exactly a missionary post, but it gave him access to India.

During the nine month voyage Henry had his first taste of the reception he could expect, noting in his journal: 'All my clear arguments are as nothing; unless the Lord stretch out his hand, I speak to stones'. Taking up his post in Calcutta he found civil and military employees of the East

India Company antagonistic towards him both as an Evangelical and for his missionary aims. Even his fellow clergy opposed him. He noted: 'I seldom or never meet with contempt on account of religion, except from Englishmen and from them invariably.'

Leaving Calcutta Henry travelled up river to Dinapore. On the way he spent his time studying Hindustani and Persian, translating the scriptures and occasionally landing to visit villages and hand out tracts.

From the Indians he met superficial curiosity; from the English at Dinapore he once again met with opposition. He continued to work on translation and began to encourage the establishment of schools, seeing in education the necessary preparation for evangelisation. In 1809 he transferred to Cawnpore, the arduous journey there causing a breakdown in his health and the first obvious manifestations of TB.

Persuaded to take a holiday, Henry turned it into a trip to Persia with the aim of completing his translation of the scriptures. Initially he found the Persians hospitable and open to rational debate on religious issues. But as soon as it became apparent that he was not a potential convert to Islam and he began to get the better of the mullahs in his arguments with them, they became hostile.

Although Henry was threatened with violence, it was TB, rough travelling con-



ditions and the extremes of climate that finally overcame him. He died on his way to Constantinople on 16 October 1812.

His journal reveals a self-critical introspection that agonised over every lapse from zealous devotion. Yet an acquaintance in 1811 recommended him as 'altogether a very learned and cheerful man but a great enthusiast in his holy calling... His good sense and great learning will delight you, whilst his constant cheerfulness will add to the hilarity of your party'.

That outward cheerfulness was despite illness, loneliness and failure - there had been no revival of Christian devotion among the colonial British in response to his preaching, no flood of converts from Hinduism or Islam as a result of his translating the scriptures.

But his focus was not on results. He had given himself to Christ and he accepted whatever followed, writing: '**I see no business in life but the work of Christ**' and '**I feel desirous to be nothing, to have nothing, to ask for nothing but what he gives.**'

Even Henry's fellow clergy opposed his Evangelical and missionary aims

THE QUESTION YOUR ANSWERS

LAST MONTH WE ASKED

QUESTION *Are angels mythical or real? Do you believe you have encountered an angelic helper? St Paul warns us against worshipping angels, but does that mean we shouldn't look to them for help? Is focussing on the supernatural a distraction from practical Christianity?*

You replied:

Sometimes, we can be conscious that we are receiving unexpected help - in resolving a problem, reviewing a relationship or smoothing some difficulty. Perhaps, then, there are for us 'guardian angels', truly messengers from God, who speak to our souls, to our spirits, and help us on our way through life. And it has always seemed to me that, on occasions, we are given the opportunity to 'entertain angels unaware', eating, drinking on first being with people who bring a heavenly message or merely by their presence, show us another path, another way of life. Haven't we all met angels somewhere, sometime? I know that I have.

Margaret Taylor

Heavenly angels may well exist, but I think anyone can take on the nature of an angel at a particular moment. Let me tell you of one I encountered. I was meeting a friend at the opera, but decided to go early to visit the Caravaggio exhibition at the Na-

tional Gallery which was nearing the end of its run. I was so disappointed to be told that there were no tickets left. I asked whether it was worth waiting in case there were any returns and was told I could sit and wait, but they didn't hold out much hope. The longer I watched happy people showing their tickets and entering the exhibition the more I longed to see it. I was about to leave when there was a tap on my shoulder. It was the young man from the ticket desk. 'Don't tell anyone', he said, and gave me a complimentary ticket. 'You are an angel!' I exclaimed and he gave me a quick hug before vanishing into the crowd. Somehow his actions made the exhibition all the more inspiring and left me on a spiritual 'high'. I couldn't see him when I came out to thank him, but he made my day so special.

Marion Dewey

THIS MONTH WE ASK

QUESTION *Statistics show that churches grow during short interregnums. Why have a parish priest?*

Please send your replies to the Parish Office, to one of the editors listed on page 2, or email: office@stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk. Please send your replies to us by 18 October. We'll print a selection of them in the next issue of *The Spire*.

POLICING IN THE COMMUNITY

The Safer Neighbourhoods programme gives you a police team dedicated to our local area. At present the Fulwell and Hampton Hill team consist of a Sergeant, Gavin Ellis, a Constable, John Poulton, and two Police Community Support Officers, Kristine Kennedy and Doug Whitear. A third support officer was due this summer.

Our role is to work with the community and local authorities to reduce crime and disorder and deal with the local issues that most affect people's quality of life.

We hold fortnightly police surgeries at the Greenwood Centre, where you can meet and talk to us in person and we will be asking you what the main issues are that concern you on our ward. Meetings are held every other Monday, from 6 pm - 8 pm.

A councillor usually joins us as many issues raised require local authority involvement. Please call us for details of the next meeting and we look forward to seeing you there.

Although Fulwell and Hampton Hill is small in comparison to other wards in the borough, there is still plenty going on and a lot is being achieved.

The ward is one of the safest in the borough, which in turn is the safest borough in London, but by working together we aim to make your ward an even safer place to live, work and socialise.

Since the team was formed in April this year, crime figures for



the months April, May and June have fallen overall by 14.1 per cent, compared to the same period last year.

The London Week of Peace, which took place from the 10-17 September, highlighted the fact that we live in one of the most diverse cities in the world, with people from across the globe and of different religions, cultures and ethnicities.

The Week of Peace was about preserving our unity by celebrating our diversity, by coming together and learning about each other. That way, crime and hatred will not flourish. This has never been more important than today, with the current security alerts and the inevitable tension this brings within communities.

Different boroughs and different wards contributed to this event in different ways. Hampton Hill and Fulwell focussed on hate crime and domestic violence and used the week to promote the stamping out of these

crimes, which are often hidden and emotionally disturbing.

To find out more about the Fulwell and Hampton Hill Safer Neighbourhood Team, contact them at Teddington Police Station, 18 Park Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0AQ. Telephone 020 8247 5816 or 078 7943 1303.

There is also extensive information about the safer neighbourhoods scheme, and the police in general, on the Metropolitan Police website at: www.met.police.uk/saferneighbourhoods.

THEATRE CLUB TICKETS

If you don't already know, the St James' Theatre Club runs regular trips to Richmond Theatre to see a variety of plays, comedies and musicals - most at a significant discount from the price you'd pay at the Box Office!

There are places free on two remaining trips planned as part of our autumn programme (the visit to see *Coppelia* in October is fully booked), including the annual pantomime - one for all the family.

AUTUMN PROGRAMME

Three Men in a Boat

Tuesday, 21 November at 7.45 pm.
Tickets £10 per person.

Jerome K. Jerome's elegant and charming comedy of friendship, human nature and quintessential Englishness is brought joyously to the stage in a sparkling new adaptation by **Clive Francis** (*Poldark*, *The Piglet Files*), who also stars in the production. Joining him are two of the country's favourite actors: **Neil Stacy** (*Duty Free*, *Gasp*) and **Simon Ward** (*Young Winston*, *Judge John Deed*).

In an attempt to beat their blues, three eccentric friends Jerome, Harris and George (and their dog!) embark on a jolly boating trip down the Thames.

From dodging steam launches and unsnarling tow ropes, to unsuccessfully fishing for trout and the trials of opening tins of pineapple, the trio's gripping adventures (and misadventures) are cleverly told through sharp observational humour and uproarious anecdotes.

A brilliant snapshot of London's middle-class playground at the turn of the century - don't miss it!



Jack and the Beanstalk

Saturday 16 December at 2 pm.
Tickets £20 per person.

Fee-Fi-Fo-Fun! Get ready to join our hero Jack this Christmas in his magical adventure up the beanstalk, meeting Dame Trot, Daisy the Cow, the glamorous fairy, a dastardly henchman, the King, Jill, the Giant and of course the hen who lays the golden eggs, along the way!

You'll be walking in the air with this year's spectacular cast. Get ready to join Mr Christmas himself, star of BBC One's *Strictly Come Dancing* and the voice of everyone's favourite Christmas song from *The Snowman*, **Aled Jones**, who will be playing the adventurous Jack.

Aled will be joined by two of the country's best loved actors well know for their roles as Boycie and Marlene in *Only Fools and Horses*, comedy duo **John Challis** as the dastardly henchman Fleshcreep and **Sue Holderness** as the glamorous Fairy.



**Richmond
Theatre**

If you are interested in coming to either of these productions, please put your name on the relevant list on the notice board in church and, if anything is not clear, please telephone Ria Beaumont 020 8943 4336.

A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

From the start of life to the end and everything in between, Brian is truly a 'Man for All Seasons'. Whether with a babe in arms at a christening, entertaining the young and not so young, or conducting a graceful farewell at a funeral service, Brian's message always has sensitivity, humour and above all a Christian spirit.

Clive, Maria and Frances Beaumont

HE GAVE ME CONFIDENCE

One of Brian's skills is enabling people to have the confidence to do things which they might not believe they can do. I never believed that I would be capable of carrying out the duties of a churchwarden, but Brian has always inspired me to believe in myself and helped me to believe that I am not so stupid after all. I have never heard him talk down to anyone or patronize them. He empowers them. He even sweet-talked me into climbing up the enormous rock in Sri Lanka called Sigyuria. I never thought I could do it because it was very scary, but with his encouragement I did.

Liz Butler

CONCERN FOR WIDER WORLD

Brian is a man of deep commitment, promoting the Christian message and, through his involvement with overseas development, he has inspired concern for the wider world.

Vincent Cable

KEEPING SCOUTS IN ORDER!

Our most obvious interaction with Brian has been at the monthly Church Parades, but Brian has been an ongoing support in many other ways, such as question and answer sessions and helping our members to complete various aspects of their badge-work. He has visited Twickeree and has given us enlightening guided tours of the church. He managed the impossible: keeping a large group of Scouts seated and engaged one evening during lengthy preparations for a Q&A session. He has always been willing to listen to us and help when he could.

Paul Fitchett

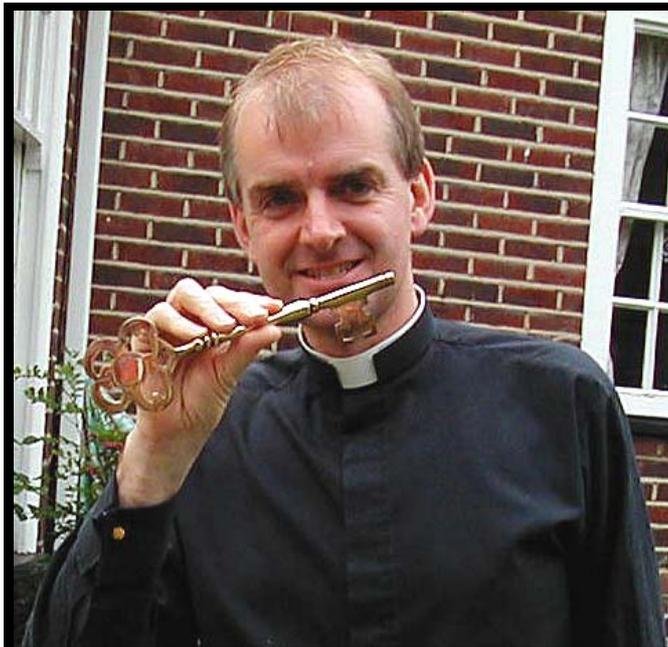
BRIAN ACTIVELY ENCOURAGES CHILDREN

When I first came to St. James's with my young son I wondered whether children were welcomed, tolerated or simply ignored. I soon discovered they were certainly welcomed, encouraged to be actively involved rather than just tolerated and definitely not ignored - even when some children get slightly confused. At a Sunday School picnic one child asked: 'Why is Jesus wearing shorts today and not his dress?' But they were always encouraged to grow in faith and understanding. Brian's patience at the annual Crib Service and his rapport with the young people at informal services has been amazing.

Lou Coaker-Basdell

FEW CHURCHES HAVE OUR RANGE OF MUSIC

When I came to Hampton Hill 16 years ago, Brian helped me rediscover what is important about Christianity. He has the very special gift of relating to different people in the best way for them. That I came to be baptised and then confirmed is largely



KEY TO SUCCESS

As Brian begins a new chapter in his ministry at St Luke's, Chelsea, we pay tribute to his 17 years at St James's in words and pictures, past and present

down to him. Brian's support for music means that few parish churches have the range and quality of musical activities of St. James'. Musically, he will be a very hard act to follow.

Martin Hinckley

INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE

Brian has a wicked sense of humour and overflows with warmth, friendship and compassion. His ability to 'speak to' everyone providing intellectual challenge with a clarity of delivery, has enabled us to achieve a deeper, clearer and more meaningful comprehension of spirituality. It has challenged us to think anew about our pre-conceived ideas and opinions and see things differently. He has been a 'good shepherd', welcoming all into his flock and leading us in the right direction. Thank you Brian.... I will miss you greatly.

Prill Hinckley

CONVEYING THE TRUTH

At Rectory School, later renamed Hampton Community College, Brian chaired various panels and was a counsellor to staff and families. We appreciated his broad-minded approach and his sense of the ridiculous, but most importantly the fact that he saw the truth and conveyed it.

Netta Forward

BOTH FEET ON THE GROUND

As churchwardens at the time, we interviewed candidates for the post of Vicar of St. James's. We knew what we wanted: a

priest with a high degree of spirituality, who would encourage all believers; not somebody with the qualities of the archangel Gabriel, but one whose feet were firmly on the ground and yet whose faith was strong enough to lead us forward. We felt that Brian had all these qualities, and it has indeed proved to be the case.

Lesley Mortimer and Alan Taylor

A WONDERFUL ROLE-MODEL AS A PRIEST

When I first came to the vicarage part-way through my training for ordination, Brian had to clear papers off a table, then books off a chair so that I could sit down and I thought: 'I like this man!' As I grew to know him better the overwhelming impression has been of a very thorough, careful and prayerful person giving kind and gentle support and encouragement. He is a wonderful role-model as a priest and his loving support continues.

Ros McDowell

SPEAKING UP AGAINST INJUSTICE IN THE WORLD

Brian considers our charitable giving to be extremely important. He is very outward-looking, seeing not only local needs but needs and injustices wherever they may be in the world. He encourages us to use our intellect and time to speak up about injustice and all his family have been involved in this. We have also gained from Ramani's experience working for Christian Aid in both formal sermons and informal chats. We shall miss your guidance and encouragement - be prepared for phone calls!

Ann Peterken

Continued on Page 6

BRIAN OUR TRIBUTE

From Page 5

DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, SAME MESSAGE

November 1991... the church lit only by candles, a full congregation of British, Germans and Dutch. Our daughter Helen arrives with her two sisters, small niece and nephew in attendance. The wedding service is conducted in English and impeccable German by Brian... wedding vows made in English by Helen and German by Thilo, her husband-to-be. A unique and unforgettable occasion. The Baptisms: 1993, 1994, 1996, 2000, same church, same vicar, same families, same languages and same heart-warming welcome at St James'. Brian is very special to all of us.

Tony and Margaret Lawrence

THE VISITOR WHO CARED

When my mother, Lesse Mills, was too confused to know who had visited her, we kept a visitors' book. Brian was a frequent visitor. One entry, 1 November was: 'Visited St Lesse on All Saints Day'. A small thing perhaps, but an indication of the value he put on every person in his care. When my back did not allow me to move from the floor, Brian would collect the therapeutic frozen peas, put them on my back and chat, replacing the peas in the freezer on his way out!

Ruth Mills

INSIGHTFUL AND A MOST TOLERANT NEIGHBOUR!

There are a few people in most people's lives, I imagine, whose acquaintance becomes a key part of one's own personal development, who change the way in which one looks on life, on faith and on one's relationships - really the world generally. Brian is such a person for me. He is able to cast things in a new light for those of us who walk through life all too often unthinkingly and blindly accepting received wisdom. Yet at the same time he and all his family are the best and most tolerant of neighbours and the most generous of hosts.

Charles Nettleton

SO MANY MONDAYS...

Monday mornings won't be the same after 17 years of going to the study at the vicarage, sorting out the work for the week and having a cup of coffee and a chat. It has been a pleasure to work for you and the two curates, Freda and Julie, both so different but developing during their three years with us and now priests in their own parishes. We have been through lots of happy and sad times together in both our families and you have always been a great source of strength to me. Thank you for making my job so pleasurable.



Janet Nunn

NEVER LOST FOR RIGHT WORDS

Brian has an exceptional skill at knowing exactly the right phrase, comment or enquiry to offer opportunities opening further discussion if needed. Brian truly cares for all his parishioners and devotes unstinting time to them, he has never made me feel my concerns were trivial, (and I am sure some of them may well have been), and has always offered a helpful suggestion for further action or thought. We look forward to hearing all the news from him, Ramani and Anusha in their new parish, so that we can share with others their success.

Coryn Robinson



OPEN DOORS IS A LASTING LEGACY

With Brian's visionary concept of 'Opening Our Doors' realised, the beauty of St James' and its vibrant life is open for all to see. The Parish Office provides a direct contact for all; to arrange baptisms, or marriages, or funerals, or hall bookings. In the north aisle, upholstered chairs and carpet have replaced the bare boards and pews. The prayer corner; the rebuilt organ; the large table and some pews moved to give more space at the west entrance. Reconstruction of the stained glass windows in the chancel and the south aisle. The churchyard, now open to view from Park Road, is maintained by the borough council.

Jack Gostling

AN ENDURING FRIENDSHIP

When I was about four years old, one of my earliest memories is of a beautiful young girl with sparkling, fun-loving eyes, bounding towards me in the school playground and introducing herself as Anusha. It was the start of a great and enduring friendship, and the forging of a strong link between both of our families. Brian Leathard has come to mean a number of very different, and yet equally significant things to my two sisters, my mother, my father and to me. He is the man who made Christianity accessible and wonderful to the naïve and impatient mind of a child; and for all of us, he is a great friend.

*Aita Ighodaro (on behalf of 'the Ighodaro girls'
- Enida, Aita and Natasha)*

COMPASSION

I want to thank you, Brian, for all the wonderful help you gave me when my world fell apart with the death of my son, Owen. I don't know what I would have done without your warmth, kindness and empathy during those dreadful early days. I would like to thank you not just for me and my family but for everyone that you have helped live through such nightmares during your years at St James'.

Jennifer McEvoy (Hywel Davies)

Teacher, musician, scholar, friend, raconteur, counsellor, businessman. Brian is many things to many people....

EMPEROR OF EMPOWERMENT

In management-speak 'empowerment' may be an overused word, but in the context of Brian's 17 years at St James' it accurately describes the way in which he has sought to build up the body of Christ within the church and in the wider community. By knowing people's skills and talents, followed by that all-important personal invitation, he has given many the confidence to take on roles and to contribute with remarkable effect to our common life.

Lesley Mortimer

ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO UNITE IN SONG

Enthusiasm is certainly the spirit of the Children's Choir and this has been engendered by Brian's ministry. His calm when the church is overrun with excited choir members at rehearsals, his tolerance of the repertoire and most of all his genuine welcome to the children and their families that makes the choir feel that St James' is a happy place to be and a place they want to return to. It encourages children of different ages and in different schools to join together in praise of God and the unifying power of music.

Susannah Nettleton

BRIAN THE BUSINESSMAN

We know and value Brian in many roles: teacher, musician, scholar, friend, raconteur, counsellor, businessman... Business man? A parish is a bit like a small business, and Brian has willingly involved himself in all the business aspects of parish life. He has led two large building projects, with all their complications and frustrations; and has never been afraid to talk to the congregation about the need for realistic giving. His new parish will be delighted!

Paul Peterken



SUPPORTER OF YOUNG AND OLD

Brian has brought to our services, along with a great sense of sincerity and spirituality, a relaxed atmosphere, warmth and love. He is totally approachable by young and old, giving great encouragement and support to young families, evidenced by the number who now regularly attend our morning services. My family and I have found Brian extremely supportive in times of difficulty, for which I thank him. We will really miss Brian and all his family. We all wish them well in their new parish.

Eila Severn

GUIDE, PHILOSOPHER AND FRIEND

I don't know whether Alexander Pope had Brian in mind when he wrote of the 'guide, philosopher and friend', but Brian has been all these to many. He has shown us the way to live, to find the moral imperative and to become - we hope - better people. And truly he is a friend to us all: open, generous, understanding and kind. Thank you for being here, Brian.

Margaret Taylor



BRINGING HAPPINESS TO ALL OF US

In 17 years, Brian has been so many things to so many people - preacher, teacher, friend, comforter, supporter, inspirer, challenger, theologian, writer, listener, music maker, thinker, mediator, visionary, priest, and many more. In doing all these things what he has really done is to bring happiness to people. Happiness because he cared, happiness because he took the trouble, happiness because he was himself. That happiness stays with us, and we shall always remember why.

Rodney Taylor

A LEADER AND A GIFTED TEACHER

Brian has helped many people in many ways. I am grateful to him above all for his teaching. Any teacher instructs, or at least tries to do so. A good teacher enables students to learn and understand. Further, a gifted teacher can so empower a group that the teaching becomes interactive; all can learn from each other. Brian's leadership has enriched us in this way.

Dick Wilde

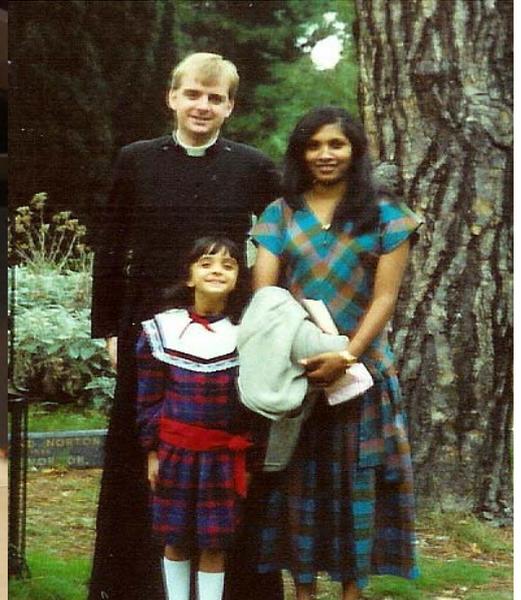
THE FUNERAL OF OUR CHOICE

When my husband Bill died nearly nine years ago, although an agnostic family, Brian enabled us to have the funeral of our choice. We had lived under the church spire for over 40 years and I had been involved with the church from week two. Bill and I had talked about our deaths, the need for ritual, and we hoped to have some of the ceremony in St James'. Brian was splendid. Thank you.

Barbara Withers



BRIAN OUR TRIBUTE



THANKS FOR THE MEMORY...

A trawl through the archives of Brian's 17 years as Vicar of St James'.
August 1989 - September 2006.

Pictures: Prill Hinckley





BRIAN, VICAR FOR ALL THE PEOPLE

I want to write about one of Brian's many contributions to St. James' from a personal perspective as a black African woman and a long-standing member of the church.

For me, his inclusive approach to his ministry has been a distinctive feature of his time at Hampton Hill.

Some 19 years ago when I moved to live here in Hampton with my husband, my intention had been to find a new church to become my permanent place of worship. I tried a couple of churches in the area, but as a rather obvious stranger did not find the reception welcoming.

This prompted me to look for another church and led to my becoming a member of St. James's. The contrast between churches was striking. I was made welcome and felt at home at St. James's.

Under Brian's leadership, I would say that the church has become like a firm working as a good 'equal opportunities employer'.

Before ethnic diversity became fashionable, or even politically correct, Brian was interested in everyone participating in the life of the church.

I note with pleasure the way in which over the years other people of similar background to myself have enjoyed the same reception at St James'.

Brian has the talent and the flair to encourage all to become involved regardless of background, colour, gender, age or anything else.

His special rapport with children has made the first Sunday of each month a joy.

Brian understands that we all have something to offer. It is no wonder that he has helped to train two women clergy at St. James's as part of a training programme for which he has been responsible.

Although we shall all miss Brian, I believe that God is sending him and Ramani to a new challenge in Chelsea, a diverse and multi-cultural area where his skills in bringing people together will be put to excellent use.

Margaret Hobbs

From Joanna Udal in Mozambique



ST LUKE'S WAS MY HOME CHURCH TOO!

Many thanks for filling me in with events at St James'. I was aware Brian's departure was fairly imminent and was very much feeling for friends in the parish, with Julie having moved recently too.

But for me, the lovely thing is that St Luke's, Chelsea, was my home church where I sang in the choir and later went forward for ordination! I very much hope Brian and Ramani will be very happy there.

Meanwhile many prayers for you all during the inter-regnum and for next ministry at St James'. I much look forward to receiving the magazine.

Things not good in Darfur, which has political ramifications for Khartoum and the whole country. I'm currently attending a peace-building workshop in Nairobi, which is very relevant. Much prayer and work needed all round.

Please pass on many greetings to friends at St James'.

Much love

*Joanna Udal
Mozambique*



THE BATTLE FOR BUSHY PARK

Fairly often I take a short cut by foot or bike to Kingston across Bushy Park. Starting at the gate by Hampton Hill Hardware the path ends at the gate into Sandy Lane, then there is a short walk through the traffic to the recently widened Kingston Bridge with its excellent footpaths and cycle lanes.

As most local people know the path through the park, which is almost exactly two miles long from gate to gate, is called Cobbler's Walk.

It is a very pleasant, undemanding walk or cycle ride as an alternative to a longer and much less pleasant trip by bus or car.

I had always imagined that there was some sinister legend attached to the name of the path, possibly with some ghostly overtones.

After living in Hampton Hill for 40 years I have just discovered that there is no creepy legend, but there is an interesting true history.

In the middle of the 18th century, the park ranger was Lord Halifax. Evidently he took it upon himself to close the park to the public soon after another road was opened to Hampton Wick.

This closure was taken badly by the cobbler, Timothy Bennett, who lost a lot of trade since the new road did not pass his shop.

In 1752 he decided to make a legal challenge to Lord Halifax about the right of way, and won his case. The path was re-opened, and Timothy Bennett became a local hero.

A memorial to him was erected about 100 years ago at the Sandy Lane end of the path.

As I cycle to Kingston, do my shopping and return, often within the hour, I think very kindly of Timothy Bennett.

Dick Wilde

Why not write to us?

The Spire welcomes letters on subjects of interest. Please include a full postal address and telephone number in all correspondence.



Send to: Letters, *The Spire*, Parish Office, St James' Church, 46 St James's Road, Hampton Hill, Middlesex TW12 1DQ.

You may also email:
office@stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk.

We reserve the right to edit all letters.

HALL NEWS

NEW CLASS AT ST JAMES' HAMPTON HILL

Bodibasics and Smiley Faces Ltd

Wednesdays from 2-3 pm

Starting Wednesday, 4 October 2006

tone & stretch class and CRÈCHE FACILITY IN THE SAME HALL

Drop in session £7

6 sessions £36

12 sessions £60

Exercise while your children are being cared for by an NNEB qualified teacher

For more information telephone Julie on 079 0347 9915

Email: bodibasics@aol.com

www.bodibasics.co.uk

ST JAMES' HISTORY

Our church was inaugurated in 1863 to cope with a specific social problem. The extension of the Thames Valley Railway Line and the building of the Hampton Water Works brought a flood of inhabitants into an area totally destitute of any amenity. Consequently, poverty, drunkenness and violence were rife.

The Common, as our area was then called, was described as 'a miserable area inhabited by an even more miserable brand of people' and the little district chapelry of St. James as 'a barn of a church in a wilderness of a parish'.

The first vicar, the Rev. John Fitzroy Fitzwygram and his wife devoted their lives and much of their fortune in improving the living conditions and prospects of the parishioners. Consequently, matters speedily improved and people started flocking to worship in the little church.

During the next 20 years there were many alterations and extensions which changed the little barn into the gracious building we know today. The north and south aisles, the porch, the organ chamber and the vestry were added and the chancel was extended.

The beautiful stained glass windows of the south aisle are notable, depicting various parables, while those in the north aisle are more muted.

The great east window represents the Ascension, flanked by the Nativity and the visit of the Magi. The most memorable, however, is the west window, 'The Transfiguration', provided by the parishioners as a memorial to Mr. Fitzwygram. The marble pulpit was given by Mr. Fitzwygram's successor, the Rev. Henry Bligh.

There are four finely worked mosaic wall panels at either side of the east end of the nave, representing Christ the King, St James, St Michael and Mary with Babe.

To celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee the tower was raised and the spire added. At that time, lighting was by gas and the heating by a coke-fired boiler, later converted to oil-firing and then to gas. 1994 saw the building of the new hall and the provision of twin boilers serving both hall and church. However the original cast-iron pipework is largely unaltered.

The church is built of London stock bricks with stone dressings and the roofs are mostly slated. The spire which is entirely of stone rises to 157 feet (approx. 48m). A wooden staircase gives access through the bell chamber to a viewing platform at the lower lancet window level, and from this, there is a ladder to a landing at the upper window level.

The interior of the church remained largely unaltered until 1963 when it was brightly painted and varnished. The pews were removed from the south aisle in 1970 and in 1983 the chancel was extended into the nave with an apron stage, the upper section of which can be raised.

Later came a complete redecoration of the interior, the installation of the present wiring and lighting system and at the same time the stonework was thoroughly cleaned. In 1991 the pews in the north aisle were replaced by separate, comfortable, movable chairs.

The 1979 speech reinforcement system has been brought up to date with new microphones, another speaker and audio facilities. There is also a TV link to a monitor in the hall.

REGISTERS

BAPTISMS



6th

Alex Samuel Challinor, Teddington
Madeleine Mae Price, Hampton Hill
Matthew James Sedgwick, Hampton Hill

20th

Connor Robert Douglas Welsh,
Teddington

WEDDINGS



12th

Natasha Elizabeth Beal and Robin
Philip Estall

AROUND THE SPIRE

We are very pleased to hear that Brian Jeffries is due out of hospital.

Julie's induction on 5 September at All Saints Church, Hampton, was a most happy occasion, with a packed church. Julie spoke with great clarity, assurance and joy. Everyone enjoyed the splendid reception after the service.



We are delighted to hear that Rosalie Meyerowitz is recovering at home.

If you would like a news item to be included, please send it to: *Around the Spire*, the Parish Office, St James' Church, 46 St James's Road, Hampton Hill TW12 1DQ. Or email: office@stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk

ARCHIVE 100 YEARS AGO

I am glad to say that several members of the congregation most kindly sent contributions to be added to the special offertories on the Sunday after St. James's Day for the debt in connection with the Church Expenses Fund. These contributions have increased the amount given to £29 0s. 4d., and if the ordinary offertories are maintained at their present improved level throughout the year and no unexpected claim comes upon the fund, the deficit will entirely disappear. I find that many people do not understand the purposes for which this fund is responsible and therefore do not see the necessity for giving it any larger support. I would therefore point out that the following are the ordinary expenses that come upon the fund:-

Organ Tuning, Organist and Choir Expenses about £80
Church Cleaning and Bell Ringing £24 Washing Surplices £6
Electric Light £14 Printing and Stationery £9 insurance £7 10s.
Verger £20 Fuel £8 Wine for Holy Communion £4 Repairs £10
Sundries £10

This does not include extra expenses which arise from time to time and which have to be met by special efforts. "Church Expenses" is by no means a visionary term. The churchwardens feel that if it is fully known and understood how important the claims upon the fund are, there will be no lack of support, as all members of the congregation will wish that the fabric of the Church and the general comfort of the worshippers should be properly maintained and attended to.

CHARLES R. JOB

CHARITY NEWS SPEAR

In 1986 two men died sleeping rough on the riverside in prosperous Richmond. Reaction from the community was so strong that SPEAR (originally known as the Single Persons Emergency Accommodation in Richmond) was established.

This year's Harvest is collecting tinned and dry food for SPEAR. The charity relies heavily on donations from individuals and organisations locally. Donations come in the form of finances and blankets, anything a person needs to get from nothing to something.

On average three people a night sleep rough in Richmond. Before SPEAR came along the average was as high as ten. There is no single cause of homelessness. Unemployment, bereavement, the break down of families, mental health issues, substance misuse, sofa surfing and asylum are all issues SPEAR has encountered.

There are numerous things the charity can offer to those sleeping rough. One of the first is shelter in their 12 bed Direct Access Hostel in Kew Road, Richmond (facing the A316 roundabout). The charity says it is just about coping with demand, but would like to expand.

As well as the hostel, SPEAR has:

- A specialist support team to assist drug and/or alcohol users; and
- A contact assessment and support team to help users with advice appointments, resettlement and tenancy arrangements.

The aim is to get people accommodation and help them regain their independence.

SPEAR has an excellent relationship with the wider community of Richmond, as well as its partners which include the local council and the local primary care trust.

It offers excellent services to those most marginalised in soci-

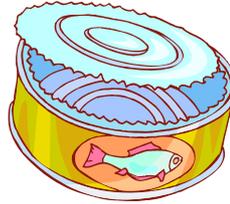
ety and strives constantly to improve those services.

Anyone interested in becoming involved with SPEAR should call 020 8892 7441.

If you fear someone is homeless within the borough, call the outreach worker on 020 8892 7522.

Collecting for Harvest until mid-October

If you can't bring your gift to the Harvest Festival service on Sunday 1 October, please remember that we are still accepting donations until mid-October. They should be left at the back of the church.



We are collecting the following items:
Tinned Foods soups of any kind, meat and fish products (but no baked beans and no tinned tomatoes).

Dry Goods biscuits, chocolate, tea, coffee, pasta.

Soft drinks cordials.

Toiletries toothbrushes, toothpaste, disposable razors, stick deodorants, body lotions soap and shampoo (travel size).

The charity prefers tinned food with at least 12 months consumption remaining. Please check the sell-by-date on your gift.



Supporting the Upper Room

The plate collection on Sunday 1 October will be given to the Upper Room, a charity that provides a broad range of services for the homeless, vulnerable, and socially disadvantaged of west London. Please give generously.

Charities and Links Committee

WEBSITE UPDATE

St James' website is in the process of being updated. If you originally provided text for any of the pages, would you please have a look at them and see if they need changing (some have already been done).

Also, a new section called 'Past Events' is now on the website. This is intended to give an insight into the kind of things that go on in and through the parish.

There are already some pages in this section but more are planned, for example, pages about the Pilgrimages led by Brian and Freda, and any future ones.

Other new pages are also now on the site and more are also planned, for example, many new pages in the new section, the History of St. James' Church.

Pictures are needed to provide attractive and interesting



pages. If anybody has photographs, children's drawings, etc., would you please get them to Prill Hinckley, by email, CD-rom, through her letter box, in the post or by leaving them in church for her.

If not sending electronically, please put them in a sealed envelope labelled 'FAO Prill Hinckley - Website Material' and add your name, address and telephone number if you would like them to be returned to you after scanning.

Any reports of events would be gratefully received.

This update is happening partly because any prospective new vicar will probably look at the site and definitely because it's about time!

Prill Hinckley (Webmaster), 115 Burtons Road, Hampton Hill, Middx. TW121DL. Email: p.m.hinckley@blueyonder.co.uk.

AND FINALLY... BRIAN

The two small words 'Thank you' hardly seem adequate to express our huge sense of gratitude for all your kindnesses last weekend. As you can imagine it was a very emotionally charged time for all of us in the Vicarage and we greatly appreciated your support, presence, words, refreshments, gifts, hugs and embraces.

Even more importantly, the weekend served as a cameo of all the warmth, support and love we have cherished while being in this community in Hampton Hill. For that no words can suffice, but 'Thank you'.

Please do join us on Thursday 5 October at 8 pm at St Luke's Church, Sydney Street, Chelsea, for Brian's induction as Rector.

Brian, Ramani and Anusha



From 1 October our address is: The Rectory, 64a Flood Street, London SW3 5TE. Telephone 020 7352 6331.

Our emails are:
bleathard@hotmail.co.uk
rlleathard@hotmail.com
nushkapush@hotmail.com

At the church office, Brian is contactable on: 020 7351 7365; and email: brianleathard@chelseaparish.org