

The Spire

JULY 2009

Making a difference

How our giving supports people around the world



11am Parish Communion on 26 July

St James's Day

The Dean of Westminster Abbey joins our celebrations

The Spire

St James's Church
Registered Charity No 1129286

This Spire is produced nine times a year on behalf of the PCC of St James's Church.

We make no charge for this magazine but hope that you will contribute towards the production costs, enabling us to expand our important outreach across the parish.

If you are a regular reader please consider making an annual donation. Cheques should be made payable to 'The PCC of St James' and sent to Spire Appeal c/o the Parish Office.

Thank you.

GET IN TOUCH

STORIES, FEATURES

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NEXT ISSUE/COPY DEADLINE

The August/September full colour, double issue will be published on Sunday 2 August. All copy must be with us by **Monday 6 July**.

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When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

WELCOME

July 2009



July is always a special month for our church as we celebrate St James's Day – this year on Sunday 26 July with Parish Communion at 11am. The preacher that day will be the Dean of Westminster, the Very Revd John Hall.

The St James's Day Eucharist will be followed by a parish lunch in the Vicarage garden. There will also be a chance to tour the spire and ring the bells.

On Wednesday 2 September, St James's has been given the opportunity of a pilgrimage to Westminster Abbey in the evening finishing with Compline. There are more details about this in the events section on page seven.

You will find more about St James in Peter's *Leader Column* and in *Our Church* on the back page.

We look forward to these two special days in the life of our church.

Best wishes

Janet

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For the latest news: www.stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk

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► **UPDATES**
Please tell us about any changes

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SERVICES FOR JULY

• Sundays

• 8am Holy Communion
• 9.30am Parish Communion

• 5 July - 4th Sunday after Trinity

• Ezekiel 2.1-5
• 2 Corinthians 12.2-10
• Mark 6.1-13

• 12 July - 5th Sunday after Trinity

• Amos 7.7-15
• Ephesians 1.3-14
• Mark 6.14-29

• 19 July - 6th Sunday after Trinity

• Jeremiah 23.1-6
• Ephesians 2.11-22
• Mark 6.30-34, 53-56

• 26 July - 7th Sunday after Trinity at 11am

• Acts 11.27-12.2
• 2 Corinthians 4.7-15
• Matthew 20.20-28

• 1st Sunday in month

• 5 July
• 9.30am All-age Communion

• Mondays-Fridays (but not Tuesdays)

• 9.15am Morning Prayer

• Tuesdays

• 9.30am Holy Communion

• 1st Wednesday in month

• 1 July
• 7am Commuter Communion

• 1st Thursday in month

• 2 July
• 2pm Holy Communion

THE LEADER COLUMN

FORGET FAME AND FORTUNE. A PILGRIMAGE OFFERS A TRULY INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

A talent for finding God



On talent shows such as *The X Factor* and *Britain's Got Talent*, contestants often speak of having been on an 'incredible journey'. Why? Maybe because they have fulfilled a lifelong dream to perform in front of people in large numbers. Or that they have worked with people they see as heroes. Or they have had the chance to reach their potential.

Whatever it is, the contestants have a goal in mind and they strive to reach it. Often the Christian Church uses the word 'journey' to describe the spiritual side to a person's life.

More strongly, the word 'pilgrimage' is used. A pilgrimage is a journey to a place seen as being special, sacred, holy. A pilgrimage is an 'incredible journey' but here the end is not fame and fortune, but God.

'Pilgrimage' is around for St. James's this month.

On 26 July we shall celebrate St. James, patron saint of our church and parish, on the day following his 'proper' day in the Church's calendar.

Our patron saint James is also associated with pilgrimage. As you can read on the back page of this magazine, James is allegedly buried at Santiago de Compostela in the west of Spain. Pilgrims still walk a route to the shrine of St. James. Do they go because there is something about James's life that inspires them? Or is it that sense of seeking something, a sacred something? Does the physical effort to reach a place mirror a spiritual effort to come closer to God?

I would hope that the image of 'pilgrimage' may be something that can speak to us whether or not we undertake a physical journey.

A pilgrimage is a journey with the aim of reaching a sacred place; a holy place; a place that is somehow different. Underlying it all, though, must be the desire to reach God. A pilgrimage centre is not an end in itself - of itself it is no more than a physical place. It is what it points to that matters. Any church, whether it be a great cathedral or the smallest church



Peter Vannozzi

building with nothing in particular to recommend it architecturally, can be a place where we travel to find God.

On 26 July we shall celebrate our Parish Communion at 11am and will follow the service with a lunch together. Our preacher will be the Very Revd John Hall, Dean of Westminster. Dean John bears a great weight of responsibility for a wonderful building, Westminster Abbey. The term 'iconic' is thrown around rather a lot these days in relation to buildings, but if iconic can be used of a building, surely it must be so with the Abbey.

Millions have visited the Abbey, and it is famous as the venue for the Coronation, as a place for national celebrations and commemorations, and as a centre of

pilgrimage. Until the time of King Henry VIII, the Abbey was a place of pilgrimage as people flocked to the shrine of the saint and king, Edward the Confessor, for some 500 years. Over the past few years the pilgrimage emphasis has grown again, and St. James's will be having a Parish Pilgrimage Tour on the evening of Wednesday 2 September.

Who goes with us on a pilgrimage? Even if we travel alone physically, we always have people with us; other pilgrims going to the same place; people who have made the journey in the past. For Christians the company of others is always there, as in Christ they are one as members of the Church. With a pilgrimage it is about 'us' rather than 'me'. We are never alone. St. James is one of those on the journey with us.

This July, then, we give thanks for St. James on the Sunday closest to his day. He is a companion on the journey with us, our pilgrimage, as we seek to come closer to God. Whether we travel physically, or in heart and mind, we are on a journey. We can be sure we have a final destination that is certain - nothing less than God's presence. This really is an incredible journey.

➔ **There are places still available for St. James's Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2010.**

IN THOUGHT AND PRAYER

Jim Cotter is a priest who has produced several books of material for prayer and worship, and reflection. He has produced a paraphrase of the Psalms. Here is his version of Psalm 84



On Pilgrimage

How lovely are your dwellings, O God,
how beautiful are the holy places.
In the days of my pilgrimage I yearn for them:
they are temples of your living presence.
I have a desire and longing to enter my true home:
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

For the sparrow has found a house for herself,
and the swallow a nest to lay her young.
Even so are those who dwell in your house -
they will always be praising you.
And your Spirit makes a home deep within us:
let us welcome and delight in your Presence.

Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
in whose heart are your ways,
Who, trudging through the plains of misery,
find in them an unexpected spring,
a well from deep below the barren ground,
and the pools are filled with water.

They become springs of healing for others,
reservoirs of compassion for those who are bruised.
Strengthened themselves they lend courage to others,
and God will be there at the end of their journey.

One day lived in your presence
is better than a thousand in my own dwelling.
I would rather begin in the burning sun
on the threshold of the house of my God
than sit in cool courtyards
of luxury and worldly success.

For you are my light and my shield,
you will give me your grace and your glory.



Set sail with our carers and toddlers' group



It now has a name, a logo and a start date. St James's Ark is a new group for carers and toddlers, open to all pram-pushers: mums, dads, grandparents, carers and under-fives.

The Ark launches on **Monday 14 September** and will run in church every weekday during school term time from 10.30am-12.30pm. Come and share in conversation, refreshments, play time, story time, crafts and worship. The cost will be £2 per session, per family - regardless of how many of you there are.

If you have any pre-school toys, books or craft equipment (all in a good condition please) that your family has outgrown or no longer uses the group would like to hear from you. It also needs any old shirts (both child and adult sizes) for use during messy play. For further details about the group contact the parish office telephone 020 8941 6003; Revd Debbie 01784 260498; or Debbie Nunn 020 8979 3078. Donated toys may also be given to Carole Greville-Giddings or Suzanne Brett.

Leave the car at home and help the planet

On Sunday 5 July leave your car at home and walk or cycle to church. Or at least share a car if possible. Even better, walk to church EVERY Sunday! We'd like to cut our carbon footprint and hopefully encourage you to think about how you travel every day.

Transport plays a part in our work, in our leisure, and in meeting our daily needs. However, transport systems, based as they are on profit and convenience, have created as many problems as benefits.

We should be concerned not just about the cost and convenience to ourselves, but also their effect on others. The decisions we make are part of our Christian responsibility to care for God's creation.

Did you know that some 60% of all car trips are less than five miles and 70% of journeys to work are by car? School journeys account for one in six cars at the height of the rush hour. Small changes can have a big impact. And it could make us all fitter and healthier too.

Bottled water: **More than 150 billion litres of bottled water are sold worldwide every year. This contributes significantly to landfill and transport emissions. Say no to bottled water and drink tap water. Buy a refillable, washable bottle to use instead.**



REGISTERS FOR MAY

Baptisms

17 Alexander Michael Johnston, Walton-on-Thames.

17 Jemima Grace Elizabeth Atkins, Teddington.

31 Jasmine Dawn Frost, Hanworth.

31 Hannah Jane Phillips, Hampton.

Weddings

16 Steven Antony Haslett and Pamela Mary Carley

30 Mark Edward John Williams and Leanne Jane Francis

30 Steven Lawson Mesher and Ursula Butler

Funeral

12 Barbara Anne Alexander, 70, Twickenham.

What a difference we all make

Ann Peterken explains how our charitable giving is helping the lives of countless people in the UK and across the world

St James does not leave its charitable giving to chance, having decided many years ago to allocate 10% of its annual income for charitable donations.

The Charities and Links committee therefore has a budgeted sum of money to distribute each year, giving half to charities in the UK and half to charities overseas. It also gives priority to church agencies. Some of the recipients are mentioned in this article, and there's a complete list on the Witness and Mission section of our website.

Throughout the year parishioners at St James are always very generous in supporting special collections. This may be a money collection during Sunday worship or during Lent; it may also be donations of dried goods at Harvest; or clothing for our link parish in Pemba, Mozambique.

Many people are also giving unwanted gardening tools, fabric, scissors and sewing machines to **Tools With A Mission** (our parish contact is Janet Nunn on 020 8979 6325).

Every May we join the nationwide fundraising efforts during **Christian Aid Week**. This means delivering and collecting envelopes across the parish, a task undertaken by parishioners under the devoted guidance of Margaret Taylor.

Some years we hold a special event, such as a concert or a Quiz Night, to boost the amount we can give to Christian Aid. It is a charity dear to our hearts that works with people, of all faiths and none, in around 50 countries, to combat poverty and injustice.

Much closer to home St James supports the work of **Welcare** in Richmond, a Christian charity working with parents and young children in need. Welcare greatly values its links with local churches, whose grants go towards paying the salary of a full-time social worker to facilitate groups of women, children and families on various topics from parenting skills to self-esteem and stress management.

A little further away in Hammersmith, we support the work of **The Upper Room**, a community charity that has been helping

people in need for over 18 years. It is based at St Saviour's Church in Wendell Park and their Project Manager, Bruce Marquart, is preaching at St James on Sunday 12 July.



Welcare at work and play

An outreach project on the White City Estate in west London, the **Upper Room for Kids** (UR4KIDS) is now in its sixth year, providing fun activities and a nutritious breakfast before school for more than 40 children in need from five primary schools. Even with local parents as volunteers, it costs about £100 per day.

The **Upper Room** is just one of many urban community projects that benefit from the Church Urban Fund, a grant-making charity set up by the Church of England 21 years ago as an expression of its mission to serve the poorest within our society. It began in the wake of a major recession and sadly, in 2009, is seeing an increase in demand for the very same reason. St James is very happy to support this charity as part of its national outreach.



St James has always valued being part of the world Church, supporting the work of the **Church Mission Society (CMS)**, **USPG: Anglicans in World Mission** and the Diocese of London's partnership link with Mozambique and Angola, known as **ALMA**.

Through CMS we support a mission partner, most recently the Revd Joanna Udal who was in Sudan for eight years. Now that Joanna has



Early risers: breakfast on the White City Estate

returned to London to be the Archbishop of Canterbury's Secretary for Anglican Communion Affairs, we are looking for a new mission partner - perhaps in South America.

Through USPG: Anglicans in World Mission we have supported healthcare at the remote hospital of **St Luke's** in Milo, south-west Tanzania, for at least 30 years - exchanging letters with their clinical officer Benaiah Kilwale. In August Ann Peterken will be visiting the hospital - the first ever visit by a parishioner as the hospital is definitely off the beaten track!



Benaiah Kilwale, clinical officer at St Luke's Hospital

ALMA means *soul* in Portuguese and this thriving diocesan partnership will be 11 years old on Sunday, 12 July.

As well as supporting ALMA projects, such as recent Lent Appeals for water provision and school building, St James is linked with the parish of **Santa Maria Madelena** in Pemba, right up on the north-east coast. We share this link with St Peter and St Paul in Teddington and benefit greatly from joint discussion and action.

Our charitable outreach at St James is about more than money - it's about understanding the work that each charity does and building relationships with the

people who do the work. This is why our committee is called Charities and Links.

Please take a look in the Witness and Mission section of our website of www.stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk for information on other charities we support, with links to their informative websites.

CAN YOU HELP?

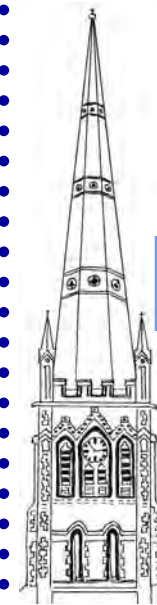
Early in the year Benaiah asked if we could help to sponsor some students who will work at **St Luke's Hospital** in Milo on completion of their nursing, midwifery and pharmaceutical courses.

In all our years of correspondence this is the first time Benaiah has made such a request. He is obviously concerned about staff shortages and we wanted to respond.

So as not to interfere with the Lent Appeal, a targeted approach was adopted and the wonderful news is that £4198 (including Gift Aid) was received from 19 donors at St James and has been sent.

It is enough to sponsor Sarafina Chaka and Christine Kilwale, plus the first year of nursing for Hongera Komba. We would like to raise another £1000 to fully sponsor Hongera for her three-year course.

If you can help please telephone Ann Peterken on 020 8891 5862.



AROUND THE SPIRE

NEWS FROM HAMPTON HILL AND BEYOND

The final hymn as we bid farewell to organist Matthew

Matthew O'Malley leaves St. James's on 12 July. Matthew has been a splendid organist and has contributed greatly to our musical life in worship. He has led the choir and has displayed a keen sense of what fits the liturgy of the day. We send Matthew all good wishes for his new job at Blackheath High School for Girls in September and for his marriage to Alexa on 18 July.



Vera Bannister is now home after a stay in hospital. Her second great-grandchild, Morgan Arthur, was born recently, a son for Sarah and Charlie Lewis, who live in Poole.

The Christian Aid collection exceeded our target, and now stands at £4027. Thank you to all who made this result possible.



Daughter for the Nunn family

Congratulations to Geoffrey and Tiffany Nunn on the arrival of their daughter, **Philippa**. Geoffrey and Tiffany were married at St. James's last year and the baby is the first grandchild for Debbie and John.



The revised total raised for the London diocese Lent appeal by the **Sunday School** is £240. The money, from a sponsored sleeper and parish breakfast the next morning, will go towards water and sanitation projects in Angola and Mozambique. Well done to everybody.

Well done to the 3rd Hampton Hill Brownies and Guides, whose Bring and Buy Sale in June raised £180 for church funds.

Celebrating the life of Barbara Alexander

The church was crowded on 12 May to celebrate the life of **Barbara Alexander**, who died at the age of 70 from cancer. Barbara was a Liberal Democrat borough councillor for Hampton Hill from 1990 to 2002 and worked tirelessly for the people of the area.

Barbara married Gavin Alexander in 1964. He became headteacher of Hampton School in 1970, while she taught French in local schools and brought up their three children. Both were elected to the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames in 1990, with Barbara increasing her workload after Gavin's death in 1993. She was deputy council leader, sat on committees, chaired the governing bodies of Hampton Community College and Carisle Infant School, and was an active member of MIND and the Council for Voluntary Service. Barbara is survived by Ewan, Kate and Robert and her seven grandchildren.

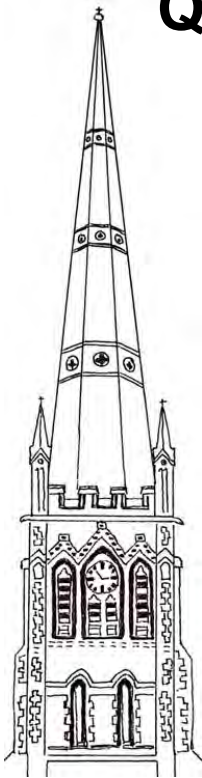


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Quiz - St. James's Tower and Spire

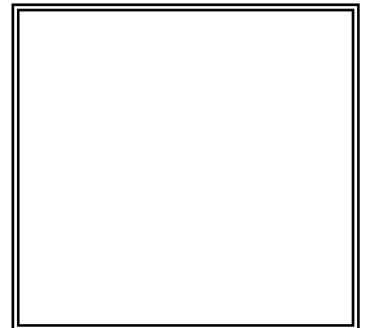
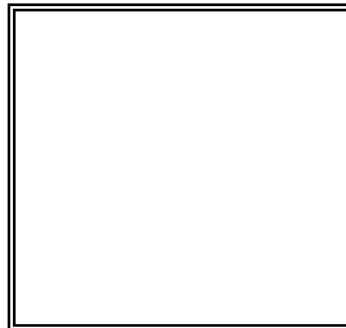


- Colour the picture
 - Answer the questions using the following words: (belfry, church corners, stock bricks, 48 metres, the sound, Portland stone, gargoyles, four, pyramid, four.)
1. How many clock faces are there on the tower?
 2. What is the tower made of?
 3. What is the name of the place where the bells are hung?
 4. The windows in the tower do not have glass but openings or louvres so that what can travel?
 5. What shape is the spire?
 6. What is the spire made of?
 7. How tall is the spire?



8. What is this called?
.....
9. How many are there?
.....
10. Where are they?
.....

- Design your own gargoyle
- Design your own clock face



- **The belfry** is above
 - the nave
 - the baptistry
 - the south aisle
- How do you get into the belfry?
 - by using a lift
 - by climbing a rope
 - by going up a spiral staircase
- **The clock** is
 - a simple pendulum wall clock
 - a cuckoo clock
 - a digital alarm clock
- **The bells** were made by
 - John Williams & Sons
 - John Lennon & Sons
 - John Warner & Sons



- Choose from the following to fill the gaps: (strike, manually, clock, fixed, clappers)
- The bells** are so are not rung by swinging them on their axles. They are chimed (by hand) by one ringer pulling sideways on ropes which hang vertically side by side. The ropes operate which the bells. Four of the bells are also connected electrically to the, and automatically chime the hours and the quarters.



- Choose from the following to fill the gaps: (PRAISE, EDWARD VII, PEACE, THANKSGIVING, 1902, MEN, HIGHEST, GOODWILL)
- The clock** strikes and chimes the quarter hours on four bells which are inscribed:
1. CORONATION OF KING JUNE 26th 1902
 - FEAR GOD HONOUR THE KING
 2. JUNE 26th 1902 HONOUR ALL, LOVE THE BROTHERHOOD
 3. GLORY TO GOD IN THE
 4. ON EARTH
 5. TO ALL MEN
 6. ENTER INTO HIS GATES WITH AND INTO HIS COURTS WITH
- A further two bells were added in



Revelations

Problems in Perspective

'May you live in interesting times' is said to be a Chinese curse. Over the past years our times seem to get increasingly interesting. One crisis follows another, and a new problem takes our attention from the old ones, even though these remain unsolved. Looming over us are the impending world climate change and the incessant fighting in Africa and Asia, both leading to humanitarian disasters. Both were pushed into the background of our political and media attention by the credit crunch, and this itself was displaced in the attention of the UK by revelations about MPs' expense accounts. This in turn was followed by the political upheaval in the UK following the results of the local council and the European Parliamentary elections.

While our financial and political problems need urgent attention and action, it is to be hoped this is done bearing in mind the impact their solutions will have on the larger, more important and longer-term crises of climate change and war. Ecologically-friendly and ethical manufacturing, food production and world trade are vital for the future of the world.

Poets and Poetry

Carol Ann Duffy's appointment in May as poet laureate was warmly welcomed by her fellow poets and by the poetry-reading public. The appointment of the first woman in this post has given it a special prominence. Poetry can express truth which is beyond formal analysis. The emotional perception of women and men is complementary, and their poetry illuminates in this complementary manner. Duffy says she cannot write to order; a poem comes to her as a gift, not on command. We may not get poems written to order for state occasions; we can, however, expect illuminating expressions of pain, sorrow, love, joy and wonder.

The election of the Oxford professor of poetry has been less happy. Rumours were circulated about the earlier behaviour of the favourite, Derek Walcott. Ruth Padel, the second favourite, carelessly repeated these rumours, and both poets were discredited. They were both well qualified for the position, but now both have withdrawn, expressing their regrets. Both have perhaps made human errors; both are still gifted poets with much to offer us.

Answers to Prayer

The young Tom Sawyer was told at Sunday school that God always answers prayer, and prayed to be given some fish-hooks. He was disappointed. Recently the real-life Jon Maguire was the head of Cru Investment Management. According to *The Mail on Sunday*, Maguire is a fervent Christian, and makes much of his faith. He planned investments in African farming: 'God told me two years ago that if I would look after Africa he would look after Cru.' But after poor results the assets of Cru were frozen in 2008. Maguire was disappointed, and so were his investors. Perhaps if Maguire had discussed his insight with a priest, or even perhaps if he had read and reflected on Tom Sawyer, he would have seen that the answer to prayer is not always what we want, though if we are sincere we believe it will give us help to find what we really need.



Music for a Summer Evening

- Friday, 3 July, 8pm, YMCA Hawker Centre, Lower Ham Road, Kingston upon Thames KT2 5BH
- Thameside Clarinet Choir performs a concert of popular and light classical music. Admission at the door or tickets from members, £5 each, accompanied children free.

Churches Together Around Hampton

- Friday 3 July, from 5.30pm, **Barbecue and play**, Hampton Methodist Church, Percy Road
- Early evening barbecue from 5.30pm, followed by Mark Topping's one-man play about the life of John Wesley at 7.30pm. Do one or both. Tickets £5 for each event, from Ann Peterken, telephone 020 8891 5862.

3rd Hampton Hill Scout Group

- Saturday 4 July, 3pm, **George Stanley Hall, at the rear of Holly Road Recreation Ground, Hampton Hill**
- Everyone is welcome to join the group's annual celebration, group review, annual general meeting and barbeque, with entertainers, inflatables, games and refreshments. We look forward to seeing you there.

Car-free Sunday

- Sunday 5 July, **St James's Church**
- Can you walk or ride a bicycle to church, or perhaps share your car with another church member instead of using your car? We are having a car-free Sunday on 5 July to include all the uniformed organisations. There will be a national car-free day on **Tuesday 22 September**.
- We hope to cut our carbon footprint by encouraging you to walk, cycle or car share when you come to church. For more information about the national campaign go to: www.christianecology.org.uk/carfrsun.htm

Desmond Tutu lecture

- Monday 13 July, **St Paul's Cathedral, London EC4M 8AD, 6.45pm-7.45pm, ticket holders only**
- Archbishop Desmond Tutu will deliver a lecture in aid of Advocates for International Development (A4ID) on the cathedral floor. At 77, he remains irrepressible and influential in his native South Africa and on the global

Vicar's View



For the last time, which member of the choir put bubble mixture in the organ blower?

stage. He is chairman of a group of former world leaders called The Elders, launched on Nelson Mandela's 89th birthday in 2007 to tackle some of the world's problems. A4ID works with organisations and developing country governments to eradicate poverty.

Entry is free, but only to ticket holders.

For tickets email desmondutu@a4id.org

For more information on A4ID visit www.a4id.org

St James's Day celebrations and lunch

Sunday 26 July, from 11am, **St James's Church and the neighbouring Vicarage gardens**

Everyone is invited to join us to celebrate our saint's day. **Please note that Parish Communion is at 11am.**

The preacher at this service will be The Very Revd John Hall, the Dean of Westminster. The service will be followed by a lunch of cold dishes and cuts in the Vicarage gardens. There will be tours of the tower from 1-3pm and the chance to ring the bells. There is no charge for lunch, but we are asking people to bring and share salads and puddings. Entry will be by ticket only, available from the Parish Office or from the back of the church after Parish Communion on Sundays. If you are able to help on the day, please telephone Liz Wilmot on 020 8977 9434 or email her elizabethwilmot@talktalk.net

Parish Pilgrimage Tour

Wednesday 2 September, from 6pm, **Westminster Abbey, London**

The tour begins at 6.15pm and will be followed at 7.15pm by Compline in St Faith's Chapel. If you would like to join us, add your name to the list on the board in church or telephone Liz Wilmot on 020 8977 9434.

St James's Theatre Club

Thursday, 3 September, 7.45pm, **Annie, Richmond Theatre**

Su Pollard stars in a heart-warming, rags-to-riches story, with lots of toe-tapping songs. Tickets are £15 (normal price £25). To join us, please put your name on the church notice board or telephone Ria Beaumont on 020 8943 4336. As usual, transport can be arranged.

London Walk

Saturday 5 September, 10.30am, **St Anselm's Parish Church, Hayes**

This year's London loop walk by Christians begins with a service, followed by tea, coffee and biscuits. The theme is God's Creation, where the walk will focus particularly on the expansion of Heathrow airport. The event is free. For more information contact Father Danny Elizabeth, telephone 020 8573 0958.

Colour Me Beautiful

Friday 25 September, 7.30pm, **St James's Church Hall**

An evening of information, inspiration and fun with Gayna Cooper, Image Consultant. Tickets £8 each, or £15 for two, to include a glass of wine. Available from Kirstie Hird in the Parish Office, telephone 020 8941 6003 or email office@stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk; or from Liz Wilmot in church on Sundays, or telephone 020 8977 9434 or email elizabethwilmot@talktalk.net

Confirmation Service

Sunday 22 November, **St James's Church**

There will be a confirmation service here at St James in November with Bishop Paul. Anyone aged 11 or over who would like to find out more about being confirmed should speak to Peter or Debbie. There will be a meeting for interested adults in church on **Saturday 18 July** at 11am.

A hostage to fortune?



Towards the end of an 18-day trip around South Africa last October, my wife pressed the wrong button on her camera. We were in danger of losing 300 precious memories of a super journey that had taken us over 2,000 kilometres around that wonderful country.

Luck was with us, however, as we found a clever young man in a Knysna camera shop who would do his best to retrieve the lost photos. I was waiting outside the shop when I caught the eye of an African trader selling carved figurines and ostrich eggs off a couple of trestle tables in the street.

He beckoned me over and asked me if I preferred the carving of the man or the one of the woman. I waffled, wriggling uncomfortably, and sought to avoid the real question, which was: *'Which one would you like, sir?'*

In truth, he seemed just happy to talk and, after a short while, the talk moved on to Barack Obama. He asked me if I thought Obama would make a difference to the lot of the black man.

I said I was reading Obama's book, *Dreams from My Father*, and told him that, even at the age of 18 or 20, Obama had been very aware of the history and fortunes of the black man.

I offered a couple of optimistic, probably patronising comments and then Sisay, the trader, took over.

This is what he had to say:

'I was born and brought up in Ethiopia and went to school for 16 years, studying history, geography, biology, chemistry and much more. But what skills did it give me to get on in life? Here I am – I'm now 50 – and I'm still eking out an existence selling ostrich eggs and carved figurines on a street corner in Knysna.'

At that point, a rather large American approached the stall and picked up an ostrich egg. 'How much is this?'

'160 rand and I have a box for it', replied Sisay.

'Hmm, 160 rand.' There followed a short pause and then the American asked: 'What time do you close?'

'Six o'clock', came the reply.

'We'll be back!', said the American, rather unconvincingly.

My friendly street-trader picked up the thread of his story straightaway:

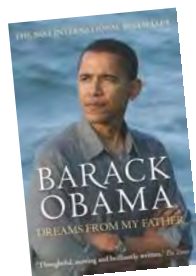
'How does the black man escape this poverty? We've got the Atlantic Ocean on one side and the Indian Ocean on the other and yet we have no water! Will Obama make any difference to the black man in Africa? No, he won't!'

And then he seemed to put his finger on the central issue: **'How can we acquire personal independence, personal confidence to try new things, to escape the chains of poverty? It's not just money that we need, it's relevant education – we need to acquire skills that will enable us to improve our position in society.'**

With these thoughts left hanging in the air, I realised that the camera shop was about to close and so I took Sisay's address and said goodbye. As I did so, he said: 'Cos you understand, I'm not angry, it's just that I'm not happy either.'

At that time, in Knysna, I was about half-way through Barack Obama's book and, as I read on, I felt compelled to underline those parts of the book that seemed relevant to my conversation with this lovely man. His assertion that 'we need to acquire the skills that will enable us to improve our position in society' resonated with me as I continued reading the book.

There was one piece in particular when Barack runs into a man while he's working as a community worker in the rough suburbs of Chicago in the 1980s. The man, called Asante, had a stack of SAT practice exams on his desk:



'Just think about what a real education for these children would involve. It would start by giving a child an understanding of himself, his world, his culture, his community... but for the black child, everything's turned upside down. From day one, he's learning about someone else's history. Someone else's culture.'

And then, towards the end of the book, I found myself being jerked back to our experience as white tourists in South Africa, when Barack, now in Kenya, asks:

'Did our waiter know that black rule had come? Did it mean anything to him? ... He learned that the same people who controlled the land before independence still control it and that he still cannot eat in the restaurants or stay in the hotels that the white man has built.'

I must say that's what I felt like, 20 or more years later, when eating in restaurants and staying in hotels in South Africa. I suspect that my friendly street-trader in Knysna felt the same way too.



The patron saint of our church and parish, James, brother of John, is depicted artistically in St. James's Church in two ways - through a mosaic of him, above, and through a shell. The mosaic was given in 1913 in memory of Jane Barnard and the dedication reads 'For many years a most devoted and unselfish parish worker.' It is interesting to note that a mosaic of a saint when a statue or icon probably would not have been.

St. James is seen holding a staff - perhaps a pilgrim's staff? James is allegedly buried at Santiago de Compostela in Spain. In the centuries following his death, James became associated with the evangelising of Spain, and as a powerful defender of Christianity against the Moors. The heyday of the cult of Santiago de Compostela was from the 12th to the 15th century, and the pilgrimage to Compostela became one of the most important of medieval Christendom.

James is holding a book inscribed with a cross with a shell in the middle of it. The book is presumably the Gospel - the good news that James was sent out to proclaim. A shell is another symbol of a pilgrim.

James stands out on three counts: he was one of the three disciples who witnessed the Transfiguration of Christ. Jesus took him, along with Peter and John, to 'watch' with him in the garden of Gethsemane. Finally, he went on to be the first apostle to die for the Christian faith, when in AD 44 King Herod Agrippa put him to the sword in Jerusalem at Passover time.

James is, though, wearing robes which are quite highly decorated. Perhaps they are meant to suggest the robes of a priest, but equally it may be artistic licence.



In several places around the church there is a shell. Besides the mosaic, the most obvious places are on the dedication stone of the church hall and over the vicarage front door. The scallop shell is found in abundance on the western coast of Spain, and pilgrims would take a shell to prove that they had been on pilgrimage. Later elaboration saw the lines on the shell coming together at a single point as pointing to different routes all converging at St James's tomb.

More than 400 churches in England are dedicated to St James.