

Thank you to all the many children who entered our competition to design a front cover for this Easter edition of **The Spire**. There were some adventurous, sensitive, funny and carefully prepared entries. It was fascinating to see what the children associated with Easter. There were plenty of eggs, free range and chocolate, scores of rabbits and dozens of daffodils. There were very few entries that had a cross. Perhaps there is an important message for the church in that! The reason I so liked Lucy Newman's winning entry was because it linked our spire with **The Spire** magazine, and the cross, both the dark shadow and the brightness of the empty cross on a hill, not Hampton but Jerusalem. It's a super design Lucy, Well Done!

That transformation of dark shadow to bright light is important symbolism for Easter and conveys something very powerful. Betrayal, arrest, mock trial, running away all happened at night in the darkness. The scriptures record that the earth itself was plunged into total darkness at the time of Christ's death. "It was night" are the only words recorded in John's Gospel when the foulness of Judas' betrayal was fully understood. "It was night" - words that conjure up chaos, fear, the unknown. The very first act of God in creation, according to Genesis, was to create light, to set bounds on darkness, limits on chaos. Yet here darkness reigns on Good Friday. The darkness of all human pain, all human suffering and misery is focused into the darkness of God in human form.

Good Friday, and all its darkness, comes before Easter Day. We have separated them, but in reality whether they are 1st and 3rd day or centuries apart they are part of one event, part of the showing of how and what God is. For just as Good Friday shows God who is with his creation even in the very depths of depravity and darkness, so Easter Day shows God who leads his creation through and out of that darkness into the waiting morning. A God of surprises, indeed. God who neither abandons creation nor is destroyed by it. God who draws creation beyond itself into re-creation.

Easter Day does not cancel out Good Friday. We can't get to Easter without Good Friday. We can't get to new life without facing up to and turning from all in the old life which destroys, all that lurks in the hiddenness of our humanity, both corporately and individually. But if we are prepared, in all honesty, to face the darkness, then the Easter story proclaims that the light of the new day will dawn - maybe not as we expect it - but it will dawn. The light shines and the darkness has never overcome it.

George Herbert used another image for darkness and light, namely, dust and gold. He really is worth reading. So indulge yourself with some George Herbert, priest and poet, as you open your Easter egg, for he writes of Easter Day

Rise heart: thy Lord is risen. Sing his praise
Without delays.
Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise
With him may'st rise:
That, as his death calcined thee to dust,
His life may make thee gold, and much more just.

Come to church over Eastertide, you will be most welcome. Perhaps the darkness and the light for you, will be seen more truly. And even the dust of life be turned to gold.

Brian Leathard

ONE MONTH IN THE COUNTRY OF BRAZIL

It was my first visit to this the fifth largest country in the world and we had only planned to see a small corner in the extreme Southeast called the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Although many of you thought I was on holiday, it was a working visit to a longtime friend of mine from her PhD years in London, funded by the Royal Society and the Brazilian Academy of Sciences, and based at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS). John came with me for the first two weeks and we were able to spend the New Year in the family beach house on the coastal strip, a long established sand bar that separates the Atlantic ocean from a massive inland lake and the wetlands of this region. Spending hours lying in one of those wonderful cocoon-shaped hammocks, made in north eastern Brazil, slung between two trees while reading a good novel, was just what I needed to recover from the pharyngo-laryngitis that had kept me from singing any of the carols over Christmas.

The outline of my visit was to go on a fossil collecting trip, teach a course at the university, and finish some joint research on fossil fishes from the Amazon Basin with my friend Martha Richter. These activities allowed us to sample a region of the world, parts where tourists rarely go, to find out first hand how they live. Religion apparently has a very low profile in their everyday life, Catholicism, although the official religion, is in decline and with the liberalism and freedom to worship all gods many extreme sects have emerged. Undoubtedly there are many, many, very poor people and the challenge is to raise the awareness, level of education, and skills of this vast pool of human resource, because Brazil is indeed a very fertile country. The shanty towns thrive in the industrial areas and grow out from the edges of the towns, built of any type of material and on the government land at the margins of the roads. In Porto Alegre where we stayed, these are spreading up the hillsides, and the horsedrawn wooden carts are allowed to pass through the busy streets. It would be socially unacceptable to prevent this, as the people attempt to make a living out of collecting and sorting discarded materials from the dense population of the town. As a very high percentage of the population are under the age of 15, parents continually urge the children to beg. An even worse situation arises from the abandoned children, who have never experienced any sense of values of any kind, these survive on crime, begging and seeking small jobs entirely by their own wits.

Probably as a result of the extremes of poverty and undoubted considerable wealth, crimes against personal possessions are very high and one's personal freedom to move

about is greatly restricted. We were discouraged from walking alone anywhere, and were only able to explore in the guarded parks with good security. Parking in the streets by restaurants was always accompanied by a minder claiming his tip at the end, and shopping at the supermarket meant first depositing any personal bags at the desk in exchange for a ticket. The new shopping malls are the only easy secure way of walking around to select goods for purchase. We have returned with an appreciation of our freedom in this country to exercise and go at leisure where we choose. Despite these problems, there was a sense of everyone of whatever racial origin and status being an integrated Brazilian of right. They are very warm people. If you can speak Portuguese, communication would be easy because they are very friendly people who use positive eye contact and body language, in a way that is often missing here in the environs of London.

We toured around the extreme south east corner of Brazil up to the border with Uruguay, in the pampas lands of the gauchos, where food is very cheap and barbecued meat is served in abundance at the plentiful Churrascarias, by macho men in the gaucho baggy pants and spurred boots. We stayed at the small local hotels en route; these were easy to book into with our local guides and were good value. All these towns were very colourful with trees in flower along all the streets, most of which had cobbled roads. One town in particular was memorable for the town square, which at night was populated by at least 50 large toads, there to collect the insects attracted by the lights illuminating the grass.

After John returned home Martha and I explored the lake area, Lagos dos Patos, south and west of Porto Alegre, to see the great variety of birds in the wetlands. This turned out to be quite an adventure as the weather had changed to storms with torrential rain from cloudbursts causing impassable roads. In the worst area the main road was collapsing at the sides where the lower lying ground had flooded from the broken banks of the river. Here the single story houses were half full of water and the people had nowhere else to go except on the higher ground of the main road. We made our way by water-planing on the flooded roads and diverting along the earth roads in the worst places.

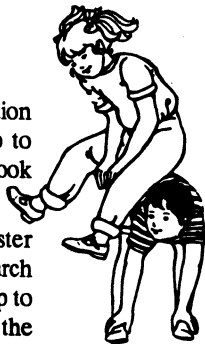
I should finish by saying that the work side of the trip was very rewarding as I had a group of very keen graduate students in Palaeontology to teach at the Museum of Science and Technology at PUCRS. They were very pleased to hear first hand of topics they had read about in the journals and to have the opportunity to study new material and to read the original scientific articles; they all worked diligently till late in the labs. Also rewarding, was to stay with a colleague and friend to experience the difficulties for myself that impinge on her daily life; always to return home with a more enlightened view, and I hope more wisdom to address our own problems in our daily lives.

Moya Meredith Smith

Children's Corner - Easter

Firstly, Congratulations to Lucy Newman, winner of our competition to design a cover for this Easter edition of The Spire. Also to Elizabeth Hodges the runner up. Thank you to all those who took time to enter.

I guess for a lot of us the most important thing about Easter is Easter Eggs! However, it is also the most important event in the Church year, when we celebrate Jesus rising from the dead and going up to Heaven. Many of the things we enjoy at Easter have a link with the Church and the story of Holy Week. Here are a few:-



- Hot Cross Buns** - The cross represents the Cross where Jesus was crucified.
- Simnel Cake** - This is traditional marzipan Easter cake with eleven marzipan balls round the edge, representing the eleven faithful disciples.
- Easter Eggs** - These may be chocolate or decorated real eggs (hard boiled of course) and represent the New Life that Jesus gave us at Easter time.
- Palm Crosses** - Help us to remember the palms that were thrown at Jesus' feet as he carried his cross.

The answers to February's anagrams were:-

chocolate, sweets, crisps, coca cola, lemonade, cakes,
bananas, water, milk, apples oranges, salad.

Guess Who's Coming To Dinner

After last year's success we will do this again. As a reminder to what it is all about to those that remember, and as an introduction to those who don't, this is what it's all about. For a little fun, a chance of getting to know others in the congregation and to raise some more money for the ever hungry Church funds, we will have a round of dinner (or lunch) parties around the parish over the next few weeks. It would work out as follows:-

Those who volunteer as HOST/HOSTESSES would say when they would like to hold their dinner party and how many people they would be prepared to entertain.

Those who volunteer as GUESTS would say when they would like to attend such a dinner party. I will match guests with hosts, give the guests an address and a time. As they leave, they will leave a donation to the Church.

Neither hosts nor guests will be told who their dinner companions will be.

You can, of course, volunteer to be both - at different times.

Anyone who would like to join in, please fill in a form. These will be available in Church or ask me for one.

Ruth Mills 977 5165

A life in the day of . . .

I went to medical school to learn to be a doctor. I became a doctor, but what I do now bears very little resemblance to what I learned then. AIDS had not been described, CT and MRI scanning did not exist and ultrasound was in its infancy, there were only a tiny fraction of the drugs available now in use, and the complexities of molecular and cell biology and of genetic engineering were concepts that had not emerged from the laboratory.



Not only is medicine changing constantly and rapidly, but so is the world. When I was a student, computers were enormous, expensive machines that thought in obscure and unfriendly languages, medical laboratories used test tubes and occupational therapists helped convalescent patients to make fluffy rabbits. The medical journals were genteel and thin. The practice of medicine had changed only in detail from that practised in the early years of the century.

Now I have a computer on my desk, at work and at home, a lap-top computer for when I am travelling, and a hand-held computer in my pocket to organise my life. The laboratory is totally automated and the occupational therapists do home assessments for rehabilitation requirements. The journals have quintupled in number and size, and many are now accessible on the Internet. Medicine has become high technology, but ultimately is still about patients.

My work is particularly involved in medical education and research, supported by a continuing clinical commitment, which keeps my patient orientation. Research facilitates the development of new diagnostic techniques and treatments. Improving standards and curricula in education at all levels ensures that patient care is optimised. Most importantly, my on-going clinical work ensures that I keep in touch with people, the patients and all the other staff involved in their care.

So how do I spend my days? I do ward rounds, out-patient clinics, endoscopy lists, lecture, teach and research. I see patients' relatives, meet trainees, talk to colleagues, and organise my department and the workings of the hospital. I go to numerous meetings and committees, in the hospital, in the local trust, the region, the college, the deanery, and national and international meetings where I try to influence matters. This requires regular travelling, in this country and around the world.

-My days start early and finish late, but the ends of the day are protected time when I can get on with things without too many interruptions. Lunch is on the hoof, in a meeting or missed because something over-ran. The on-call rota means being available every fourth day and weekend for emergencies, supporting the duty team. I am also treasurer of a professional society and actively involved with a patient-based charity. The days are full, sometimes much fuller than ideal.

Fortunately, most patients get better, sometimes irrespective of their treatment. Those with relapsing problems can be helped to cope better by understanding care and

education. Trainees develop and mature; new ideas are tested and researched, and the pattern for future practice evolves in a rapidly changing world.

However when I get down to what I really do, it is actually far more concerned with change management than with anything that I learned in medical school. All of that is totally out-of-date, and has been replaced by the process of continuing education. But change is much more widespread, and has much deeper implications because change affects people. It is disruptive, upsetting, confusing, often seen as threatening and is happening increasingly fast. The numerous NHS reforms, the new undergraduate curriculum, the reorganisation of postgraduate education, managerial transfer to agency status and changing roles in health care are all resulting in change. My work is to involve people in these changes, so that they understand them, support them and have ownership of them. I have also had to learn to change myself. I had no idea when I went to medical school that I would become a change manager, but that is really what I do!

Rodney Taylor

Easter Communion

Only a rich man knows this sight I see
Of begging hands. How fortunate is he! -
Poor at his gate and plenty to confer
- But happier am I, Christ's Almoner.

Ah, have you seen a leafy tree, above
Whose branches hovers the uncertain dove?
Then every leaf breathes, "Come and rest you here!"
-So plead these outstretched hands to Jesus near.

See how they beg! - the cleanly and the stained,
The ringless, ringed, ease-smooth and labour-grained:
Whatever they have done or left undone
Or yet shall do, they ask this Gift each one!

Hands! O dumb pleaders for this deathless boon,
Ye stretch so often for life's empty moon,
So rare its gold-begetting Sun ye plead! -
Yet He is here your gift, and all your need!

K.T.S. 1944

NOTES ON THIS POEM:

It was during a stay at Grantham with my sister and her husband Alan, in the late Sixties, that we made the fifteen-miles-or-so trip to St. James's Church, Aslackby (pronounced AYSELBY) and met its Vicar, Kenneth Street.

He and Alan had become firm friends while both were serving with B.A.O.R., in which Kenneth was a Chaplain.

On subsequent visits, we in turn grew to know him, and would compare notes on our respective St. James's - particularly regarding fabric maintenance matters!

A hymn which he wrote for the Aslackby Patronal Festival can be found in our yellow-bound St. James's Hymn book: we used to sing it here to the tune Regent Square - perhaps we could revive it?

"Easter Communion" came to light recently among some old papers, and separately, a book of further poems by Kenneth, published by Anne, his widow, not long after his death in 1985. I hope to share some of these with you in future issues.

Jack Gostling

Women's Forum

The Women's Forum meets in the Church Hall on the 1st Wednesday in the month at 2.30pm and on the 3rd Wednesday at 8pm. Make a note in your diaries, everyone is welcome.

Our programme for the next six months is as follows:

April 3rd	Holy Week - The Vicar
April 17th	Who's Your Father? - Helen Taylor
May 1st	May Day Customs
May 15th	Air your views on Liturgical Matters
June 5th	My War Memories - Chrissie Hockley
June 17th	The Probation Service - Speaker
July 3rd	Invitation Service
July 17th	Summer Party
No meetings in August	
Sept. 4th	Re-marriage in Church? - Ruth Mills
Sept. 18th	Men in the Women's Forum? - Discussion
Oct. 2nd	Men in the Women's Forum? - Discussion
Oct. 16th	A.G.M.

The talk on Family History in April will be what is described these days as "pro-active" i.e. lots of audience participation and hopefully lots of fun as well as information.

Other dates to take note of:-

Service at Laurel Dene - Sunday 19th May at 5pm.

Baptismal Party - Sunday 22nd September at 3.30pm.

Church Bazaar - Saturday 23rd November.

While November may seem a long way off the time soon passes. If you are willing to run a stall or if you have an idea for a 'different' kind of stall please speak to Wendy Baker 979 3654.

Forthcoming Events

On Good Friday there will be a DIY performance of Handel's Messiah in the Church at 7.30pm. Dress will be informal. Everyone who attends is asked for a contribution towards the Organ Fund of £5. Please bring your own copies if possible, there will be some available for hire (returnable deposit £5).

The organ will be played for us by Jeremy Martin and the solos will be sung by members of the Cantanti Camerati, the Teddington Choral Society and members of the St. James's Choir.

Do come and sing, or if you prefer, listen to Handel's great music.

A rather different musical event will be held on Saturday April 20th at 3pm in the Church Hall - A TEA DANCE. Tickets will be £3 to include refreshments. Music will be provided by Cantanti players and the music directed by our very own organist, Geoffrey Bowyer.

Dr Irene Ighardaro

When Tony Ighardaro's mother died late last year he wrote an obituary of her in "The Guardian". This is an excerpt which gives a little information about the interesting and fruitful life she led.

"Irene Ighardaro entered Durham University at the start of the second world war, and qualified in 1945, becoming Sierra Leone's first woman doctor, the first African woman to qualify as a doctor in the UK, and Black Africa's second female doctor. After six months as Houseman at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle, she joined her brother's large practice.

She was born in Freetown, Sierra Leone, where her father worked as a civil engineer in charge of the waterworks; employed in the Colonial Service, he was the only black head of a public department for three decades. Mixing with academics, politicians, diplomats and medical colleagues in Ibadan, the home of Nigeria's first university, she thrived in the post-independent atmosphere.

During this time, she mobilised women into new, effective organisations. She was, for example, a founder member of the National Council of Women's Societies (1959), a member of the Medical Advisory Committee of the Western Region, and president of the Nigerian Association of University Women.

In the 1950's she started the Benin branch of the YWCA and attended the World Conference in London in 1955. She became a member of the Executive Council of the world-wide YWCA, and was elected a world vice president in 1967. She was elected national president of the YWCA of Nigeria in 1965, and in 1966 she published her first book, "Baby's first year".

Back in Benin City with her husband, the third phase of her career began. She set up the University of Benin's teaching hospital and became first chairman of the board. It was the first time a woman had been appointed to so high a policy-making position in

Nigeria, but she had no doubt about her ability to do the job."

Dr. Ighardaro received the MBE in 1958; she spent her life seeking social reform and also supporting her husband, one time Minister of Health in the Nigerian government, later a high court judge and finally Iyase of Benin, a tribal 'kingship'.

Around the Spire

Thanks to the people, chiefly Alan, Jack and Brian Baker who redecorated the Vestry, the brightness in there is now quite blinding.

Thanks to all the children who took part in the competition for the cover design, we hope you like the one we chose.

Good to hear that Roy Brooks is somewhat improved since he came home from hospital, love to him and Kath.

The Lent Groups have made a good start, it's always good to talk (as they say).

Sorry that the envelopes which should have accompanied last month's Spire appeal were missing from many magazines, contributions still welcome in any envelope, to the Vicarage please.

Your Parish Needs You

Your prayers

Your Views



Your skills and resources

Your commitment

Come to the

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

(squeezed between Parish Communion and Shared Lunch)

11am on Sunday 21 April 1996

**We shall elect Churchwardens and the Parochial Church Council,
review the past year and look to the future
as well as adopting the Electoral Roll
which will remain valid until 2002**

EASTER SERVICES - 1966

Sunday	31st March	0800 Holy Communion
PALM SUNDAY		0930 Parish Communion - distribution of Palms
Monday	1st April	2100 Compline
Tuesday	2nd April	0930 Holy Communion 2100 Compline
Wednesday	3rd April	2100 Compline
MAUNDAY THURSDAY	4th April	1930 Coffee and Hot Cross Buns 2000 Parish Communion and Washing of the Feet
GOOD FRIDAY	5th April	0915 Morning Prayer 1200 Three Hour Devotional Service 1930 Messiah from Scratch (in aid of Organ Fund)
	Easter Eve	
	6th April	2000 Easter Liturgy - Lighting the New Fire
	EASTER DAY	
	7th April	0800 Holy Communion 0930 Parish Communion 1830 Easter Songs of Praise



DATES TO NOTE

April 1st	2.00pm	Editorial Board, 68 Park Road
April 3rd	2.30pm	Women's Forum
April 5th	7.30pm	DIY Messiah in Church
April 17th	8.00pm	Women's Forum
April 20th	10.30am	Coffee Morning in aid of the RNLI
	3.00pm	Tea Dance
April 21st	11.00am	APCM followed by shared lunch

COPY DATE FOR NEXT MAGAZINE: APRIL 14th