



Six new ways to get married in church

Couples planning to marry after 1 October 2008 will have the freedom to marry in a church where they have a family or other connection. Under a relaxation of the rules, they will not have to be living in the parish, which will enable many more couples to marry in their favoured church. The Church of England Marriage Measure was approved by the General Synod last July, and completed its parliamentary process in April. Simon Hughes MP, who supported the Measure, told the House of Commons that, in an age that bemoaned the loss of community and the difficulty of maintaining roots, "more people will be likely to be married in churches because they will be able to marry in those that they think are important or valuable. That will be a good thing for the Church, for couples, and their families, who will feel more involved in the process."

Existing law is based on right of residency, allowing a couple to marry in the parish where one or both of

them live, whether they are baptised or not and whether they are churchgoers or not. Marrying elsewhere has required a special licence or six months' of regular attendance, followed by entry on the church electoral roll. These options remain. But couples now need to fulfil just one of six criteria. They can marry in a parish church if one of them was baptised or confirmed there, if one of them has ever lived in the parish for six months or more; or if one of them has at any time regularly attended public worship there for six months or more. A family connection opens up further possibilities, adding the right to marry in a parish if one of the parents has lived for six months or more in the child's lifetime, or has regularly attended worship there in the child's lifetime. Couples can also marry in a parish where their parents or grandparents were married.

One of the first couples in Shortlands to act on the changes are Neil Lambert and Christina Stokes.

They live in Edinburgh but wish to be married at St. Mary's Shortlands, the parish in which Christina's parents live. Charles Stokes, Christina's father commented: "Our daughter moved with us from Chislehurst to Shortlands when she was 13 and even though she is now 27 and has lived in Oxford, Cardiff and Edinburgh since she went to University and started to make her own way in the world, Shortlands is where she sees the family home and Shortlands is where she wants to be married. This notwithstanding there will be a posse from Scotland and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where her fiance's home is, descending on the day. Having not lived in the parish for so long, this would have been much harder had it not been for the Church of England's new regulations."

The Measure has been almost ten years in the making. The Dean of Wakefield, the Very Revd. George Nairn-Briggs, who chaired the steering committee, said it would

meet a real pastoral need. He described the list of connections as "simple and user-friendly" when the Measure returned to the Synod in July, and promised that it would be supplemented by "equally user-friendly guidance from the House of Bishops".

From 5 June, clergy can now access those guidelines at the Church of England website. Implementing the existing law has caused some anguish in the past, most recently in Shere in Surrey, where the Rector, the Revd. Charles Lawrence, came under criticism from parishioners for observing the residency rules.

The Bishop of St. Edmundsbury & Ipswich, the Rt. Revd. Nigel Stock, was on the steering committee for the Measure. He said: "Research does show that more people would like to marry in church than actually do. I hope this new law will make it much easier for clergy to say 'yes' to couples when they first enquire."

Sun shines on Parish Picnic



The Annual Parish Picnic attracted a record attendance on one of the few warm and sunny days of early summer.

Face painting, a bouncy castle, a scrumptious barbecue, a drinks tent, as well as the opportunity to win a ride on the Archdeacon of Bromley and Bexley's Harley Davidson added to the wonderful ambience in the stunning Church grounds.

Pictured are Alexandra and Ruby after enjoying having their faces painted, and Annette German winner of the Harley Davidson ride with Archdeacon Paul.

Many families joined in for the first time - the community knows the Picnic is a great day out together.



St. Mary's, Shortlands Advent Dinner and Dance
Friday, 28 November, 7.30pm for 7.45pm
in the Garden Suite of the Bromley Court Hotel
Black Tie or Lounge Suit

Tickets £30, inclusive of three course dinner with coffee and all age Dance/Disco, available from 1 September from the Parish Office (8460 5682) or from Churchwardens.

Samaritans - St. Mary's Mission for July

Bromley and Orpington Samaritans have been offering 24 hour confidential emotional support to local people for over 40 years. Callers make contact by phone, email, text, letter or by visiting the branch in Station Road, Orpington. The 90 volunteers are unpaid and offer duties on a rota system. Each month the volunteers talk with around 1500 people from 9 - 90+. They receive no grants, and have to fund-raise to keep the branch running. Samaritans is supported by St. Mary's as the Mission of the Month.



From the Registers

Holy Matrimony

We congratulate:

24 May Laura Fardon and
Richard Smith

31 May Claire Reynolds and
Andrew Screech

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

15 May John Greenwood, aged 57
30 May Doug MacDonald, aged 64

Interment of Ashes

24 May Peter Petty



Remembering

John Greenwood

John Greenwood was born in 1950. He was educated at Aske's Boys' School in New Cross. He qualified as an accountant in 1974 and subsequently became Chief Executive Officer in a number of well known businesses, being highly respected by his business colleagues.

He married Elaine in 1972 and they had three children, Laura, Susan and Adam and two grandchildren Max and Isaac.

A large congregation attended his funeral service at Beckenham Crematorium which was conducted by Canon Paul Miller. Family and business colleagues paid tribute to a much loved man.

SPAN THANKS

We record our thanks for donations during the month of May of £10.06

The Harvest Lunch will take place in the Church Hall after the 10.30am Family & Parade Service on Sunday, 5 October.

Information about tickets will follow next month.

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Dolphin to retire

The leader of the Shortlands Rainbow group is to retire in July, after 8 years in charge. June Dalton, a former English Secondary School teacher is standing down.

Known to the girls as 'Dolphin', she is happy to know that the group will be in good hands as she leaves. "When I took over in 2000 the group was about to fold. Now there are two groups and we have a waiting list." Dolphin reported: Rainbows is for girls aged 5-6, and they currently meet in St. Mary's Hall on Monday nights. "I have loved working with the girls and am delighted the groups are now so strong." Dolphin added.

The new Leaders will be Michelle Edmonds, Lucy Gregory and Melanie Connelli.

Three Choirs Festival a huge success 'Impressive!' says Dean

Over 200 people packed into St. Mary's, Shortlands for the annual Three Choirs Festival, held on 18 May - Trinity Sunday.

The choirs of St. Mary's, Shortlands, St Mark's, Bromley and St. Peter and St. Paul, Bromley sang Evensong. They were directed by Frank Roddy (St. Mary's), Andrew Wilson (St. Mark's) and Tom Corns (St. Peter and St. Paul). The organ accompaniment was shared by Frank Roddy (St. Mary's), Peter Spencer (St. Peter and St. Paul) and Pam Vaughan (St. Mark's). The Preacher was Dean John Simpson, who from 1986 - 2000 was Dean of Canterbury Cathedral.

Commenting on his visit, Dean Simpson said: "The Service was very impressive and the choirs were superb. Few choirs in East Kent would match the standard shown last night. When I went to Canterbury there were 7 local church choirs of a standard high enough to sing in the Cathedral. Today there are, I fear, none. Bromley and Shortlands are very fortunate."

Special Services for July

Sunday, 6 July at 10.30am - Family and Parade Service

Sunday, 20 July at 6.30pm - Choral Evensong
Responses - Sanders, Canticles - Sumsion in A,
Anthem - Beati Quorum Via (Stanford)

Monday, 21 July at 10.00am
Highfield Junior School End of Term Service

Tuesday, 22 July at 11.00am
St. Mary's Pre-School End of Term Service

Thursday, 24 July at 11.00am
Mothers and Toddlers' End of Term Service

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London Marathon update

Edward Charnley would like to thank everyone who supported his run in the London Marathon. He completed the circuit in 3 hours 43 minutes.

He has yet to check in all the sponsorship money but to date has raised £500 for St. John Ambulance and a similar amount for the Mothers' Union Literacy Development Programme.

SPAN SUMMER ISSUE

There will be a combined August/September issue. Advertisers please note that this counts as one issue only.

The combined issue will be available at the start of August, (copy date 5 July), and the October issue will be available at the beginning of October (copy date 5 September) as usual.

St Mary's Shortlands Holiday Club 2008



Champions' Challenge

will run from
Monday 18 August to
Friday 22 August
10.00am - 3.00pm

for all primary school children.

Closing date for bookings
13 July 2008
Contact Rev'd Alison Newman
on 8658 7784

Holy Land Visit

A group of 33 pilgrims recently returned from the Holy Land where they visited many sites associated with the life of Jesus. Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho, Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee were included in the itinerary as well as many other places of biblical interest.

The trip also included a visit to the SOS Children's Village, Bethlehem where a music therapy project has been launched by the diocese and is under the direction of St. Mary's Assistant Organist, Claire Tillotson.

Pictured on their first day in the Garden of Gethsemane are the pilgrim party along with their guide, Oliver Miller (far right kneeling) who is no relation to Canon Paul Miller! (far right standing)!



Christian Aid Collection 2008

In Ghana they say: "One stick can easily be broken, but many, bound together, are strong".

By joining together as a Community, you in Shortlands raised a total of £3,878! The Pennies from Heaven laid in Church by our young people and their leaders amounted to £240. Well done all of you - and special thanks to Carol and Kevin Sloane for counting them all, and to Pat Chase who opened the Church on Pack nights. A further £275 came from St. Mary's as a percentage of the

May Plate collection.

Thank you so much to all those of you who donated or got involved in this year's mammoth effort, which, yet again, has proved so worthwhile! Your money goes directly to local organisations on the ground, where it's needed most around the world.

Last year, for each £1 given, 84p was used for direct charitable expenditure. The remaining 16p was used to raise the next £1.

Shortlands says: "Keep up the good work!"

The thread of God's love

In 563 an Irish monk was forced to leave his homeland because of a conflict that had led to a misuse of power and even bloodshed. On Pentecost Sunday he arrived on the island of Iona off the north-west coast of Scotland with twelve companions. There he began a new way of life founded on Christ's mercy and forgiveness of the past, and so created one of the great centres of faith and mission in the Christian Church. His name was Columba, and we keep his feast day on 9 June.

His monastery on Iona started as a small cluster of wooden buildings with a church and a guesthouse. Around were fields of crops and cattle and bees. But under Columba's guidance, it grew, and from Iona monks were sent into Scotland as one arm of a missionary advance that reached down through England to

France and across Europe.

That outreach was an amazing achievement. But just as amazing was the consolidation of monastic life on Iona that resulted two centuries later in the Book of Kells. This text of the four Gospels was begun by scribes and artists in the library of Iona. It grew into one of the masterpieces of Celtic art that was taken to Kells in Ireland to escape the Viking invaders who ravaged the island.

Along with the text of the Gospels, there are illustrations of Jesus, Mary and the four evangelists, together with decorations at once intricate and fantastic: patterns that interweave and interlace across the page with an odd face here and a weird creature there.

The design is in brilliant detail, and you can follow the lines as they weave in and out. This delight in

Three vicars and an artist!!



Three Vicars and an Artist teamed up at the Annual Harris Hospiscare Golf Day at Chelsfield Lakes Golf Club and won!! The competition took place on a warm and sunny day and raised over £2,000 for the Charity. Pictured from left to right are Barry Rowland (Vicar of St. Paul's Beckenham), Andrew Miller (resident technician at a London Art Gallery), Paul Miller (Vicar of Shortlands) and Gary Colville (Vicar of Rochester). In second place were the team from Beckenham Rotary Club.

patterns is evident in lots of Celtic art. It is good to imagine Columba on Iona meditating on the thread of God's grace woven into his life as he looked back to his years in Ireland and his pilgrimage to Iona. It might have seemed at one glance a complicated interweaving of events and experiences, and then perhaps as he looked again, he would see God's love threading its way through that history and redeeming both it and him.

It is the same for us. As we look at our lives, they may seem complex and involved with patterns of events and circumstances taking us here and

there. As we ponder those patterns, then we can begin to see a thread woven into the patterns that guide and lead us on. And as we stand back, all the patterns and threads seem to make sense as we spot that guiding thread.

The vicar went to the bank and asked for a statement of his account, adding: "We want to know how far afield we can go for our holiday." Handing him his statement the cashier enquired very gently: "Have you got a field at the back of your garden, sir?"

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- 08.00 Holy Communion
- 10.30 Family Communion, except the first Sunday in the month in term time. During term time there are separate groups in the Church Hall for children aged 4-14.
- 10.30 All Age Eucharist or Parade Service (1st Sunday in the month, term time).
- 18.30 Evening Service

Every Monday

- 17.00 Evening Prayers

Every Wednesday

- 10.00 Holy Communion

Further information about all services can be obtained from the Parish Office.

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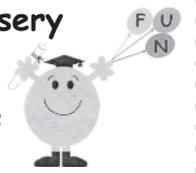
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