

Parish Records – February 2010

Old Brampton

• Holy Baptism

11 Apr: Elissia Summer Priest 23 May: Harry James Bartle

Holy Matrimony

3 Apr: Mathew Thomas Hodgkinson & Euphemia Cunnane

1 May: Alastair Ian Gordon & Zoe Joanne Myddelton

8 May: Paul Andrew Wright & Sarah Louise Catherall

30 May: Mark Stephen Waddoups & Sarah Louise Watkinson

30 May: Richard Tonge & Maria Christine Palumbo

Barlow

• Holy Baptism 2 May: Hugh Moore, Gabriel William Moore

• Funeral 17 May: Kathleen Joan Lumb

18 May: Edward Arthur Stevenson

19 May: Peter Thomas Booker

20 May: Mona Pearson

Services in June

Old Brampton Sunday services

08.00 Eucharist (2nd Sunday at Barlow; 5th Sunday at Cutthorpe)

09.30 All Age first Sunday, Eucharist 2nd and 4th Sundays
Service of the Word or Matins 3rd and 5th Sundays

18.00 Evensong (first Sunday only)

Barlow Sunday services

08.00 Mass (2nd Sunday only)

11.00 Sung Mass

Loundsley Green Sunday services

09.45 Eucharist 1st and 3rd Sundays

Service of the Word 2nd and 4th Sundays

18.00 Eucharist (2nd Sunday only)

Weekday Masses

- Tuesday, 9.30, Loundsley Green
- Wednesday, 10.00, Barlow (1st Wednesday only)
- Thursday, 9.45, Old Brampton

Bible Reading: First Thursday each month, 7.30-9.00 pm at the Rectory. Gospel of John.

Contributions to Rambling Rector

Would you like to open a topic for discussion in Rambling Rector? If so, please contact Fr Stanley: - Tel. : 01246 558122

e-mail : stanley.monkhouse@btinternet.com

Weddings, Baptisms, Enquiries

I'm available without appointment most Tuesday evenings 5 pm – 7 pm at the Rectory 01246 558112, 25 Oldridge Close, Holme Hall, S40 4UF; other times by appointment.



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Rambling Rector

Issue 22, June 2010



'What's happened to RR?'

This was the text of an email from Texas. The observant amongst you might have realised that RR22 should have come out in May 2010. And the reason it didn't was that Stanley was having a very busy time, so busy that he didn't have any time to write his little piece—which is a pity, because he enjoys writing it, and so busy that he now has a woeful chest infection. He has made up for it this month with whimsy. And clearly there will be at least one reader who eagerly awaits same.

Does the earth have a mind of its own?

In April, Susan and I were getting ready for our hols to see family in Texas. We were to be joined at Newark airport by 'our' Ed from Dublin. There were plans for a road trip into Colorado, visits here and there, and—by no means unimportant—at least one Texan steak. Rarely had so much hope been pinned on so short a holiday by so many. There was, I have to confess, a certain smugness in me: 'ha ha, suckers, we'll be having a good time while you lot are suffering from politician-itis'. Well, girls and boys, the day before we were due to depart a volcano erupted. And kept on erupting. You can guess the rest: no US trip for us. Who's smug now? It was like a bereavement, and one that had to be grieved for, but we had it easy compared to some who were stranded in less than comfortable surroundings, and others who had to make their way home by all sorts of means—exciting maybe but doubtless expensive. What did I learn from this? I suppose what I should have learnt is not to be smug. No chance. It was good for me to have it thrust in my face that pinning all my hopes on some event in the future is foolish: it may not happen. Many of us spend too long regretting the past and looking forward to the future, so we miss out on the present. To living in the present is to live out of time—no *before*, no *after*, just *now*. That is eternal life: *quality* of life, not *quantity*.

Fantasy and reality



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Let's imagine the planet is alive. It needs to let off steam from time to time, its volcanoes being just like pores on our skin that every now and then shove out secretions. Volcanoes as blackheads, or pustules. Now, if God created the cosmos—and Holy Scripture tells us God did—and if God said 'it was very good'—and Holy Scripture tells us God said just that—volcanoes must be part of God's plan. Oh, what a surprise! The world does not revolve around humanity, and certainly not around me (a hard lesson, that). Uncertainty rules in your and my lives just as much as it rules in subatomic physics.

Drill and disaster

If you don't like my fantasy, maybe you prefer a story from the author of the Sherlock Holmes stories. In *When the world screamed* (you can read it on the web), Conan Doyle saw the earth as a living creature that took unkindly to engineers drilling eight miles into its surface. Now in 2010 we have warnings of the potential hazards of drilling into the seabed, with the possibility of the drill releasing pressure under the earth's crust and causing a cataclysm that wipes out species left, right and centre. We have, too, the reality of oil slicks in the Gulf of Mexico. As Sugar Kane (M Monroe) said in *Some like it hot* (has there ever been a better film?), 'it makes a girl think'.

God and nature

One heartwarming result of the volcanic eruption was the insurance companies suddenly discovering a belief in God. What's the relationship between the laws of nature, which we haven't yet fathomed, and God? Are they the same? Read John 1 in the cultural context of the time. Obviously, since God created the cosmos, God also created its laws. Is God more than this? What is the cosmos *in*? In my humble opinion, we can only deal with these issues in metaphors: scientific metaphors like black holes, spherical universes, big bangs, expanding universes, and theological metaphors like creation, and eternal, and Divine Wisdom, and Divine love. As someone trained as a medical zoologist, I see no conflicts, but rather lots of connexions. Life is all about consequences of action or inaction—just stuff that happens' as that well-known theologian Homer Simpson says—and Christianity is not so much about *what* happens, but rather about how we cope with it, with ourselves and with each other *as* it happens.

Creation

As Loundsley Green Methodists and Anglicans come together, they move to a new stage of their life. As scientists report the creation of artificial cellular life, new possibilities open up. In Barlow church recently, Chesterfield Bach Choir sang beautiful music in the context of timeless liturgy, raising hopes that such events might become more frequent. Some of us might think that all this is part of the cosmic creative process in which humans are agents of the Divine. What matters is what happens next: do we use these events for good, or for evil?

And finally

I've been here two years now. Is my presence here part of the cosmic creative process in which humans are agents of the Divine? What matters is what happens next.

Oremus invicem – let us pray for each other.

Fr Stanley

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Loundsley Green: the end is where we start from

*What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.*

T S Eliot, *Little Gidding*

On Saturday 22 May the Anglicans and Methodists of Loundsley Green took liturgical possession of the new Loundsley Green Church (the former Methodist building). The sun shone, the church was full and the atmosphere happy. It was 'a good do', and it came as the culmination of years of analysis, reflection, discussion and planning. In the weeks leading up to that service, we celebrated the witness of the Church of the Ascension, and we said goodbye to it as a home for Sunday worship.

Notes from the Sermon during the last Sunday Service at the Church of the Ascension

This church community is very special. There is a coherence, a togetherness that comes from the way the church was established: new people, new estate, new building serving a defined locality. You've grown up together. The church is at the geographical centre of the community, so it's a visible presence. In earlier days, you had a vicar to yourself, and the parish being quite small in area, meant that he was a real community resource. These foundations mean that when you became St Pillar-to-Post, you were adept at fending for yourselves on the foundation that you had built. As David Holmes has pointed out, this not the most attractive of buildings, and yet here, inside, you have made it a numinous setting for worship: the hangings, the simple furnishings and the flexible seating. There is a real and tangible feel of Divine presence, the Incarnation writ large with God in the midst of people and the mess of daily life. All this displays devotion, faithfulness, sincerity, commitment and compassion for one another and for the people of the parish, whether they come to church or not. I admire you all tremendously.

I can therefore imagine what courage it has taken to do what you have done over the last few years. The courage to look at the future with realism, to weigh up the possibilities, to accept, however reluctantly, which building to use for worship, to come together as one congregation, for the Methodists to say goodbye, albeit temporarily, to their building and come here, and for the Anglicans now to come up against the harsh consequences of decisions they made years ago. I can imagine how delicate you may be feeling, and how much you need to grieve the loss as well as move forward to the future. We need to recognise this formally with ritual—and we shall do so.

In commending your actions of the past, therefore, I ask that we are tender with each other over the coming days and months, and that we set out on our new paths and new journeys conscious of the blessings of the past, conscious of the opportunities of the future, which you will face with the same commitment and courage as you have faced the present and the past. Most of all, let's be conscious of the blessings we have in one another—and therefore, since we are the body of the Christ, in the Lord.