

A u g u s t 2 0 0 7

Prayer for the Month.

***Creator of all, may we value your creation, respect your creation, rejoice in your creation, and use your creation rightly. Amen.***

Northenden Rectory, Ford Lane, 0161 998 – 2615

Dear Friends,

Firstly an apology to some of you, particularly those who get your Concord by post, for the late arrival of July's edition. I had hoped to get them out before we went on holiday, but a combination of my work schedule and the late arrival of the diocesan insert at the printers meant that we did not receive the copies back in Northenden until after Sue and I left. I hope you felt it was worth waiting for!

We left Northenden in the face of dire warnings about heavy rain ~ about which more later ~ and travelled across to Denmark. When we got there, we were told about bomb plots in London, and also the horrors of the weather (which, incidentally, followed us.) To find out more we were dependent on CNN news, and when we could find it, BBC Prime ~ plus what we could glean from Danish TV. When we came back, we found the BBC embroiled in a scandal about what they had in fact not broadcast about the queen, and also phone-in quizzes.

My point is that we had something to compare the BBC with, and for all the current criticisms (which seem to have come to light because the BBC is actually putting its own house in order and asserting its own standards for itself) I would back the BBC all the time. If in the global news and current affairs business BBC and CNN are the two top players, then in terms of quality and maybe even content there seems no contest. In terms of the adverts, CNN is painful. In terms of attitude and ethos, one particular CNN piece was gross. Larry King, who is apparently the doyen of celebrity interviewers, having been at it for 50 years, was interviewing Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr and others about recent Beatles re-releases. He had just asked him about his feelings after the death of George Harrison, and Paul was half way through a sentence in his answer, and was clearly quite moved and distressed ~ and King suddenly cut across him with, "OK, we've got to leave it there, ..." and the programme cut to a

rather painful advert or trailer or something. How crass can you get!

So, OK, the BBC (and all our broadcasters) does need to sort out a few things, but it is still something to be proud of, and gives a far more mature coverage of significant events than its rivals. They may be tempted to hype up some of the investigative journalism they do, which is no real credit to them and is the spin off from competition for ratings. Such hype should actually warn us to weigh up what they "reveal" all the more critically, but long may they have the freedom and the acumen to go on investigating. (And as for phone-ins ~ caveat emptor: don't trust the technology beyond what it can really cope with.)

And why bring this up in a Church magazine? Well, the quality of what we see and the information we hear does affect the way we think and react and behave; good information, and our own critical awareness of it, are moral issues, and we should not despise what is good because it could be better. Nor should we undermine something because it is not commercial.

The other thing we saw a fair amount of in Denmark was rain. Happily for us we saw it mostly through windows and car windscreens, and were able to walk around in the dry spaces between storms. What we did see was beaten down crops, and we heard reports (on the also excellent Danish TV news) that as much as a fifth of their cereal crop had been flattened. That appeared worse than over here (at least then). There was also the rather bizarre story of cows being washed away by floods in one place, only to walk ashore on another island some hours later.

But perhaps we shouldn't laugh. Once again, it is a matter of thinking that "we have the technology" ... or whatever ... to deal with the situation. We have the know-how or the transport or whatever to make sure that we have enough food. Even if we have floods or whatever here, we can always buy it in from somewhere else. That assumes we can pay for it, and people are willing to sell it, and that it is there in the first place. If there is flooding in Europe and drought in other agricultural centres, say, then what is to happen?

I have written before in Concord (usually around harvest time, I think) to suggest that the world is actually only one harvest away from famine (or maybe two, if you think of northern and southern hemispheres). Perhaps that is over-simplified, and over-dramatic, but it is not unrealistic. At one

level, we should revive an attitude of thankfulness to God, whose measured generosity harvest by harvest is what we depend on for our continued life. We cannot take it for granted. At another level, there should be wise stewardship of the Earth, so that we respect its patterns of fertility, and we do not take out more than we put back, or strip it of its balance and diversity in the name of efficiency, or cheapness. Yes, I do want a "green" agenda to have an impact, too.

But at yet another level, the way in which agriculture and trade is organised needs to be rethought. The current buzz words appear to be free trade, and free access to markets. That is OK so long as you have a surplus to trade with (i.e. you get the profit from the freedom!), and no-one corners or distorts the market. I fear that the trading climate will not be so benign in, say, ten years time, as other parts of the world develop the financial clout to buy in more of the world's food resources. We as a nation ~ and perhaps as a European Union ~ should not just be championing free trade, but should also be thinking about restoring (what was at the heart of immediate post war policies) or establishing self-sufficiency in staple foods (and encouraging other nations to do the same, rather than supplying us with luxuries out of season). If I am wrong, I suppose I shall have to eat my words. If I am not, perhaps that is all we shall have to eat.

Over the past couple of months marriage has hit the headlines. I am glad to report that we are doing nearly twice as many weddings in St.Wilfrid's this year as last, but it is not that that I am referring to. The Tories came up with the finding that marriage is good for community life (that has been written in to Anglican marriage services for some years now! ~ about 460 years or so.) and proposed a tax break for married couples. And so there were the predictable complaints that this was unfair to unmarried couples, and did not target help on children living in relative poverty. Yes, it is a complex matter, and does stability follow marrying, or marrying follow stability? But anything which supports commitment is no bad thing. Incidentally, in speaking of marriage as a foundation for community life, we are not just talking about bringing up children, but also about freeing people and supporting people to give time to wider community voluntary activity, and to provide a stable base from which they can go out to their paid work.

And so I was also interested and encouraged when I read a headline in the Times suggesting that the Government were thinking of introducing some form of legal recognition for "Common Law" marriage. (For the record, there is no such thing in English Law, though the Scots are wise enough to recognise it.) I have long believed that this would be a good thing. Walking out is not easy, and to make that clearer as a legal as well as an emotional fact is no bad thing. I wrote about this nearly fifteen years ago in *Cohabitation and Marriage*, and was able to lobby the then Lord Chancellor in favour of it ~ though to no avail. We should recognise that marriage (and so a legal acknowledgement of common law relationships) is not a shackle, as some feminists would have us believe, but a protection for people who might otherwise be casually discarded.

So, we await developments, on both counts.

And so, finally, to some advance publicity. We are anticipating a visit from the Diocesan Bishop in October, as part of his "pilgrimage" around the Diocese. He will arrive during the afternoon, pray with some of us before making one or two parish calls with me. He will then meet a number of invited guests who are involved in Northenden's community life, before leading an open act of worship and dedication in church during the evening.

For us this will also be the first part of a week-end of "Mission", including school and church services around harvest and St. Wilfrid's Day, a social event, and the usual "Open Days" over the St. Wilfrid's week-end ~ but given a different twist and wider publicity. Make a note in your diaries, and watch out for details: 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> October.

Yours sincerely,      Greg Forster

## The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) Wythenshawe Meeting

There is a meeting for worship

at the Friends' Meeting House, Wythenshawe Rd.,

At 10.30am every Sunday.

Children welcome.      Details from Enid Pinch (445 – 6778)

The main hall and smaller rooms are available for hire;

~ contact Peter Todhunter (Meeting House Warden) 834-5797,

# Northenden Methodist Church.

Palatine Road.

Minister: the Revd. David Bown,  
**5 Kenworthy Lane, Northenden, M 22 4 JF**  
**0161 998 – 2158**

## Sunday Services.

- 5<sup>th</sup> Aug. 11.00am Mrs. Margaret Hunt.  
6.30pm United Service ~ The Rev. David Bown
- 12<sup>th</sup> 11.00am Mr. Duncan Rutter
- 19<sup>th</sup> 11.00am Mr. John Howell
- 26<sup>th</sup> 11.00am The Revd. David Bown.  
(includes Holy Communion)

## COMMUNITY LUNCHESES ... ~

... Are discontinued during August.

Fun Bingo: Sat. 25<sup>th</sup> Aug. at 12 noon till 2.00pm

## Magpie ...

... has heard of posting early for Christmas, but was rather surprised when he bought some stamps in mid-July, on the day of the postal strike (there's faith for you), to find that the stamps he was sold were Christmas issue, with snowmen smiling out at him!

... understands that the proposal to put a rehabilitation unit for former drug users on the corner of Chapel Road has been withdrawn, or is at least being reconsidered.

... also understands that work on the Church Inn site should begin within a month or so, now that planning permission has finally been cleared. The same is true of work on the British Legion site. Here, apparently, some of the delay is because planning consent is getting more and more complicated, especially in Manchester, which wants to be the greenest city in England, and so is asking to know now how much carbon dioxide will be pumped into the atmosphere by the builder's cement mixer in six month's time (or something like that!). How long is a piece of string?

... has also been talking with people involved with the Tatton Arms. There were fears that the new owner would like to start again there from scratch. That is not the case. Magpie

understands that his intention is to keep the appearance of the building more or less as it is now. His intentions are commercial, certainly, both for the former pub and the adjacent theatre, but not destructive. The present fencing all round his site is intended to preserve the safety of the building, as well as to avoid costly and unsightly fly-tipping. (The loss of general parking is a shame, though). If those intentions include a posh riverside restaurant, or tourist / airport travel accommodation, rather than the very antisocial rough pub that the place had become, then so much the better. (that kind of redevelopment is long overdue) But how long?

... flew over the group of young people who have been clearing a corner of St. Wilfrid's churchyard on Saturday mornings. They have done a good job, despite the rain which has encouraged growth and made some of their work damp and unpleasant. The whole of the furthest corner is now mown down, and they are extending across towards the main path. Quite a triumph in the face of nettles taller than they are, and thick brambles and prickly hollies. Well done, and more strength to their elbows. They come from one of the Youth Clubs at West Wythenshawe Youth Centre. The work is part of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award project, which also includes canoeing on the Wye and cycling across England for some.

## St. Wilfrid's Church,

*Ford Lane. (Off Church Rd.)*

Rector: Greg Forster (998-2615)

Organist: Arthur Mellor (928-0472)

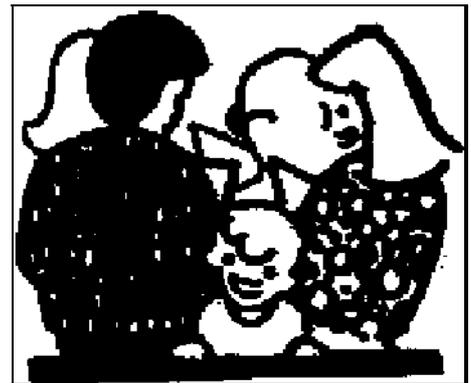
[www . stwilfridsnorthenden . org . uk](http://www.stwilfridsnorthenden.org.uk)

### Services:

Communion on Sundays at 8.00am,  
and on Thursdays at 10.00am

There is normally a "Sunday Club" for 7 – 11+ year olds in the Rectory at 10.30am, for about an hour, and ... "Scramblers", for children from 3½ to 6+, meets in the Church Hall from 10.30 till about 11.30am., except when there is a Family Service (for parents and children together) in Church. (But see below re holiday arrangements)

Aug. 5<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Family Communion





Logan David Kilcourse.

Married ... in the parish church on Saturdays ...

7<sup>th</sup> J uly      Nicola Jayne Foster to Ian Philip Habershon

14<sup>th</sup> J uly    Rebecca Cathrine Cheetham to Graeme John Carter

21<sup>st</sup> J uly      Jacqueline Bernadette Lythgoe to Peter Dawson

CHURCH ROOFS AND THINGS.                  Greg Forster

We are currently applying for a grant from English Heritage to undertake further repair work on the roof of St. Wilfrid's, together with the replacement of downspouts. Before you say, "but we've already done this", let me point out that what we dealt with a couple of years ago was the chapel and vestry roofs. The slating over the rest of the building was not touched then, and is substantially the roof that was put on in 1875 when the place was built. (There is also some damage from falling masonry during the gales in May.) To be honest, I would not be surprised if we do not get a grant ~ we do have a fairly large sum in our reserves, but not enough to do the work ourselves and still keep in the black year on year. So quite what we will in fact do waits to be seen. Two downspouts are already broken, and another is suspect, so we cannot just ignore it.