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**Cover Picture;** .... One man's way of celebrating God's creation  
~ the "B of the Bang" sculpture in Manchester's Sport City.

Prayer for the Month.

Almighty God and Father,  
you have created the heavens and the earth  
and made mankind in your own image;  
teach us to recognise your hand in all your created order,  
and to serve you with reverence and thanksgiving  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who with you and the holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things  
now and for ever, Amen

From the ASB collect for Creation Sunday, 9 weeks before Christmas.

Northenden Rectory, Ford Lane. 0161 998 – 2615

Dear Friends,

Some of you know that we were away for a short holiday along the Scottish borders at the beginning of July. We managed to pick the driest and sunniest week of a rather wet period, which was pleasant, and saw a great many things, not least a great number of wind farms. There is something majestic about these gaunt towers with their three arms and they enshrine the hope of pollution free power, but there was also something wrong about them. The arms were not turning. There was very little wind that week, and so no free energy. This source of power is erratic, and I read recently that they are guaranteed to be generating power for only about 30% of the time ~ yet this is the power source which seems to attract the greatest attention

when Government or Media or anyone else talks about renewable energy.

Don't get me wrong. Such a source of power is one to be developed and encouraged, but it is not the only source of renewable power, and should not be the only egg in our basket. The same source of information that quoted 30% reliability for wind power also quoted a figure for the availability of water power of 70% (and in a wet July one can see why!). All round the country, unobtrusive but close to the point of consumption (not 500 miles away off the Scottish coast) are rivers with existing weirs which can be ~ ought to be ~ re-utilised as sources of renewable energy which is as free as the wind, and probably cheaper in terms of set-up costs than a wind turbine. The point about being close to the point of use is serious too: a very high percentage of what is generated at the turbine is lost in transmission through miles of grid before it gets to where it is wanted.

When we were working on the old Northenden Mill a couple of years ago we discovered, I think to most people's surprise, that in its latter years it had been used to generate electricity to power its machinery, and some of that power had been sold on to the inhabitants of what is now Allanson Rd. It would be relatively easy and not obtrusive to install modern generating equipment on the weir, and on several others along the Mersey and Irwell. I hope that our local Regeneration Team, and the Environment Agency, will take up the challenge. It can be done at New Mills, so why not here?

Yours faithfully,      Greg Forster

P.S.      And on a personal note, thanks to everyone who offered words of support during the "little local difficulty" early in August. It would be easy to write a long piece "explaining" everything and simply stoking the fires, but I think more than enough has been said about it now. Perhaps what I do need to say is that I do not carry the card for any one political party, and that I do value the positive work of all of them.      GSF

***Harvest***  
***Forster***

***Greg***

Of far more importance than the last point, how are we going to celebrate harvest, and what are we praying for, looking for, and working for in connection with the world's resources and their fair and sustainable use? Both my letter about hydropower, and the later item in this issue about the congestion charge, bear

upon this, as does the just so story that comes next. We live in a finite world, and should not use its "capital" as "income". It is God's world, and we should not take his gift for granted. It is our world, not to hoard, but to share, because we are dependent on each other far more than we realise. We are finding out what It is a rich and varied world, within God already knows. an even richer and more wonderful creation, and our awe at what it contains should be transformed into a worship of God its creator. So whether you are looking at a beautiful sunset, or a TV programme about some exotic location, whether you are reading a report about the huge new atom-smashing machine in Switzerland or hearing a radio item about a new medical discovery, realise that you are finding out what God already knows, because his hand is behind it all.

Our harvest festivals themselves are not until October ~ long after most of the harvest has (we hope) been safely gathered in. So in October's issue I shall perhaps talk more about the economics and interconnectedness of what we produce and use, all of which is God's generosity to us.

## Once upon a time ...1. The Very Big BANG

A story to share with your children ~ or grandchildren

Once upon a time ... but this was before there was time for anyone or anything to be once upon ... but anyway, once upon a whatever it was, there was a ... well ... there was a thing. I don't know what else to call it, but it was there.

Now this thing was very tiny, so that you could perhaps even have held it in your hands ~ if you could even have seen it! But it was very, very, very, very heavy indeed, and so very squashed in on itself that you couldn't have held it. And since there was nothing else at all, there would have been nothing for you to stand on. In fact, if you had been there it would very soon have sucked you into itself. Things that are that heavy pull very hard too. It was, I suppose, very, very, very scary.

And so, once upon that very special moment this thing went bang. Or rather it went B A N G. Perhaps it pulled so hard and tight on itself that it snapped. Who knows? Anyway, it went BANG very, very, very, very loudly indeed. It was, you might say, a BIG BANG! It went bang so loudly that the noise is still going on, if you know how to listen, but it went bang with just the right sort of loudness. If it had been just that little bit louder, all the bits of it would have gone whiz and whoosh and all their

energy would have disappeared into nothingness. If it had gone bang just a little bit more quietly, all the bits of it would have gone slurp and splosh, and ended up falling back in on themselves. But it went bang just right, so that in the end you and me and Goldilocks would have somewhere just right to live on, because that bang was the beginning of the world and the sun and the stars and the universe and the energy and everything that is all around us.

So the thing went BANG just right, and all the bits of it, the tiny thin bits of it, much, much thinner than the air you breathe, went swirling and whirling, spinning and spinning off into the emptiness around. It was, you might say, Chaos. Humming and thrumming together like plucked violin strings, twisting and twirling in and around each other and coiling back on themselves like coiled springs. To start with they were very light and thin, even though they came from something so thick and dense and heavy, but they swirled and they whirled and they twirled and they started ... well, dancing around each other, and pulling each other together, until they stopped being on their own and they bumped and they jumped and they lumped together and became thicker and heavier and lumpier and hotter and fierier, and we call them stars.

And all this is a very long story, and if I told you how long, you wouldn't believe me, or you wouldn't know what I meant by the thousands and the millions and the billions of hours and days and months and years. And it is a very big story, and if I told you how big, you wouldn't believe me, or you wouldn't know what I meant by the thousands and the millions and the billions, not to mention the trillions, and even the quintillions, but if you could count all the grains of sand on the beach by the sea shore, then maybe you would begin to count all the stars in all the galaxies that came from that tiny thing and its very, very, very big bang.

And how do you describe something as strange and wonder-  
Can you imagine?                   ful and huge and magnificent and awe-  
  some and scary and beautiful as that?  
How can you picture that bang? Can you imagine it at all?

Well, some people have tried. Someone in Manchester has made a sculpture, with all the rays of energy from the bang stretching out in all directions, and he calls it "B of the Bang ..." and it reaches out towards you and over you as you go past.

And someone has said you should turn your television to one of the analogue channels you can't receive, and you'll see a mass of fizzling dots, and one in every hundred of those fizzling dots is made by the noise of the energy of the bang still echoing round ~ but which one in every hundred, I do not know, O best beloved. But if you are bored with the rest of television, you can always look in on the beginning of the universe for a few minutes.

And many years ago people looked up at the sky around them, and looked around at the day and the night, and the wonder and warmth of the light of the sun, and they asked themselves the question where did all this come from, and how did it happen, and they found the answer in very simple and very deep terms. They said, "In the beginning everything was emptiness and nothingness, and God said, 'Let there be light.' And light happened." They did not talk about millions and trillions. They would not have known what that meant, any more than you or I really do, though they did talk about counting the grains of sand in the desert, but they felt certain that there is a God, and God was behind it, and they believed that at the start he had made it very well and very wonderful.

And how did God make the world and the stars and all that we know? That's a very big question, though some quite little people like you have asked me it, and the whole story is very big and very long, and very wonderful, and I will try to tell you a little bit of it in this book. Maybe I'll get it right, and maybe I'll get some of it wrong, and maybe in ten years or twenty years someone will come along and say, "No, it was probably this way," but that's the way we find out things, and learn and go on learning and, I believe, finding out about the things that God already knows.

So don't stop asking those big questions, of how and why, and don't let anyone stop you asking them, even if the answer is "we don't know yet." But don't let anyone stop you asking the other big question either, and that is the question "Who?" Maybe that's a difficult question to answer too, but you'll never get an answer by giving up on difficult questions or saying we shouldn't ask them.

Greg Forster.

Sun Shines on Rainy Day ~ **St.Wilfrid's Cream Tea** Sandy Latham  
Thank you to everyone who helped, came or donated to our Cream Tea. Despite one of the soggiest days on record spirits were high and fun was had by all. The Cream Team are happy to announce that £393 was raised towards buildings repairs; cheers

all round to everyone for such wonderful support. We look forward to meeting up with you all again at Harvest ~ for lunch.

# Northenden Methodist Church.

Palatine Road.

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

## Sunday Services.

- 7<sup>th</sup> Sept.            11.00am The Revd. Malcolm Purdy  
                              6.30pm United Service at St Wilfrid's  
                              (to avoid a clash with Northenden Players)
- 14<sup>th</sup>            11.00am The Revd. Margaret Hall ~ Holy Communion
- 21<sup>st</sup>            11.00am Mr. Gwyn Williams
- 28<sup>th</sup>            11.00am The Revd. David Sanders
- 5<sup>th</sup> Oct.            11.00am Morning Worship.  
                              6.30pm Evening Worship ~ venue t.b.a.

## COMMUNITY LUNCHEES recommence ...

2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays in September ~  
**10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> 12 noon to 1.30pm**

Fun Bingo: Sat. 27<sup>th</sup> Feb., noon to 2.00pm.

## IN MEMORIAM

We are sad to report the death of Duncan Healey, who was a member of the church here while he lived in Northenden. He was very much involved in the life of the community, as our Ward Councillor for a number of years, and as a Governor of St. Wilfrid's school among other things. He and his wife moved (to Yorkshire, I believe) when he retired.

## The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) South Manchester Meeting

There is a meeting for worship

at the Friends' Meeting House, Wythenshawe Rd.,  
at 10.30am every Sunday.

Children welcome. \*Details from Lesley Thomson (491-1323)

The main hall and smaller rooms are available for hire;

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

# St. Wilfrid's Church,

*Ford Lane. (Off Church Rd.)*

Rector: Greg Forster (998-2615)

Organist: Arthur Mellor (928-0472)

www . stwilfridsnorthenden . org . uk

## Services:

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

There is a "Sunday Club" for 7 – 11+ year olds meeting 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.

Sept. 7<sup>th</sup>.            10.30am "Family" Service  
                              6.30pm United Evening Worship

Note that the service is at St. Wilfrid's this month.

14<sup>th</sup>            10.30am Morning Worship  
                              6.30pm Evening Worship

21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> Sept. ~ as 14<sup>th</sup>.

Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>            10.30am Harvest Thanksgiving.  
                              6.30pm Venue to be arranged. ~ united evening worship



## Drop in ... 2 – 5pm.

St. Wilfrid's church is open each Sunday  
from 2.00 – 5.00pm,  
for prayer, visiting, enquiries, ancestor hunting, &c.

NB Heritage Open Week End, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> Sept.

## IT'S ALL HAPPENING ... for your diaries

Mon. 8 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	Women's Group ~ see panel.
Wed. 10 <sup>th</sup>	Bible Study/Discussion. 8.00pm. Rectory.
W/E 13 <sup>th</sup> /14 <sup>th</sup>	Heritage Open Days ~ see panel
Wed. 17 <sup>th</sup>	Bible Study 8.00pm Rectory.
Thu. 18 <sup>th</sup>	PCC Meeting 7.30pm Church Hall
Mon. 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Deanery Synod.
Wed. 24 <sup>th</sup>	Bible Study 8.00pm Rectory
Thu. 25 <sup>th</sup>	School Governors' Meeting

Sat. 27<sup>th</sup> Coffee Morning Church Hall. 10.00am ...  
Wed. 1<sup>st</sup> Oct NO Bible Study. N.B. !!!  
Sun. 5<sup>th</sup> Harvest Lunch after morning service.

WOMEN'S GROUP meets in the Rectory  
at 7.45 pm for 8.00pm start on  
Monday Sept 8<sup>th</sup>, The Rev. Charles Nevin  
"Idioms and Idiosyncracies" ~  
It sounds intriguing; come and find out!  
Monday 6<sup>th</sup> Oct. A late birthday party ~ Come and celebrate.

From the Registers ~ In Memoriam ...

Derek Barlow (Morrell Rd.), Hilda Swain (Robt. Owen Gdns)

Baptised, in the parish church on Sun. 20<sup>th</sup> July ...

Nathan John McKenzie,  
Oliver Stephen Tandy Skinner, Jodene Rachel Holbrook Tandy.

... and on Sun. 10<sup>th</sup> August ...

Millie Grace Dalziel, Imogen Esme Lynton.

## *Heritage open days* ~



As part  
of this national scheme,

St. Wilfrid's church is open on  
Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> Sept., 11.00am – 5.00pm  
& Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>., 12.30 – 5.00pm

Come and look round this historic building, and explore its  
~ your ~ heritage in wood and stone, in records and  
registers. Stop and pray a while. Climb the tower and see  
five counties (weather permitting!). See exhibits about  
Northenden's present as well as its past.

Maggie ...

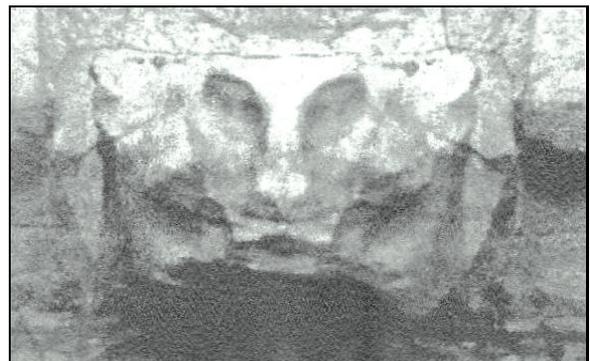
... has heard a lot about sod's law from time to time,  
and thinks he has found an example of it. It is to do with  
St. Wilfrid's School, which this year has some good SATs results  
with its year six ~ 11 year old ~ children. The staff have seen

the papers, and reckon that the marking in our case is sound and the results do do the children, and the school, the credit that is due to them for hard work in at times trying circumstances. The trouble is, the whole business about SATs this year has been such a shambles, so will people believe the good news after all the negatives?

... has not heard very much about the proposed Civil Parish Council for a while ~ and does not want to say much, for or against, at the moment. However, a little bird told him that the petition is being processed by the council's legal people at present. However there is a complication because the law on such councils changed half-way through the signature gathering process, and they are trying to work out which signatures should be counted under the old law, and which under the new one! There's lawyers for you!

... has been told there is a green man, or rather a Green Man, on St. Wilfrid's church. No, this is not an ecological "Green Man" protester, but an ancient symbol of life and vitality. Strictly, there are several ~ one stares out from the east end of the choir pew, and a number look down from the string course just below the parapet all around the nave and side aisles. They are all Victorian conceits, added

because our forebears thought a "proper" medieval church ought to have them, even though the proper mediaeval church which they demolished had had none! (why not go hunting for them on the heritage open day?) But this one is genuine medieval and has got the wear and tear to prove it



He is on the tower, looking eastward along the southern side of the nave, and is very eroded. The rector had managed a photographic reconstruction of the original, and simply called it lion-like. When Birgitta Hoffman, an archaeologist from the university, saw this she immediately recognised the flares of oak leaves streaming from his mouth, and other signs of a Green Man

But what does he mean? ... delight in God's Creation There are lots of theories, some more fanciful than others. Some people even link him to Robin Hood, I believe, while the pagans are quite keen on him too. It probably comes down to a delight in the vitality of God's creation,

in one way or another. In these eco-enthusiastic days we could say amen to that, at least!

... has talked with some of the farmers from the Farmers' Market, and understands that the extra day each month ~ the third Saturday ~ is being dropped from the schedule. It never had the extensive publicity which we had in the first few months, and has also suffered from bad weather of late. The "first Saturday" market remains: use it: push it with your friends!

... notes that Cragg's carpet shop, on the Kinsley Rd. corner has moved to Dane Rd., in Sale, now that the lease has run out. There is concern about what the owners, who are based out of Manchester, will do with it. In the Civic Society consultation in July several people suggested a Library, and I note that Cllr. Bracegirdle has made a similar suggestion.

... and what about a new Northenden Station? Tony Hoath, who knows a thing or two about railways, has suggested it in connection with the Transport (TIF) bid. Good luck to him.

"Don't dump it, donate it !!! "

This is the interesting slogan on a poster from the Tree of Life Centre, St. Mark's URC church, Oatlands Rd., down in Wythenshawe. At their community shop they are prepared to accept unwanted furniture, household items and white goods. Contact: 0161 437-0835. "Help us to help others," they say.

HELP!

The present secretary of Withington Deanery Synod is standing down, and has asked us to advertise the role. It means taking minutes of meetings, arranging the agenda (in co-operation with the standing committee), keeping membership lists and corresponding with the diocese on synod business. Let the Rector know if you are interested. People not on synod can be co-opted!

## WesleyOwen Books and Music

123 Deansgate, Manchester.  
(Opposite John Rylands Library)

The place to go for Christian books and music, Bibles and bible-study aids, Christian presents for your god-children, and for Christmas ~ or for a cup of coffee while you are in Manchester.

## That Congestion Charge!

I suppose most of you will have received the brochures from the Passenger Transport Authority consultants about the "TIF" proposals to improve public transport in Greater Manchester, and to introduce a charge for use of roads within the M60 ring at peak times. You will each have your views, and I hope you will take up their offer of commenting. I have a number of thoughts on the proposals, which I will voice here, as well as submitting them to the consultants. Some are practical or specific to Northenden, and others are more general.

Firstly, let me say that the idea of cutting down on traffic congestion both in Northenden and in Greater Manchester generally, and improving public transport across the area, seems a good idea, to be supported. There are environmental reasons for cutting back on the pollution it causes; there are economic

There are good reasons to want to cut down traffic congestion.

reasons for keeping business traffic moving. There are health reasons why those of us who can walk or cycle should do so rather than drive.

Like the proverbial bishop who was asked what he thought about sin, simply said, "I'm against it," ~ if I am asked what I think of a congestion charge I would say "I'm for it," though I may have reservations about having my movements tracked on computer. The question is, am I for this congestion charge? And the answer, I think, is "I'm against it: against this version!"

Let's start with the general. In the literature that has been circulated they proudly (I think) reassure people by saying only 20% of those using the roads at peak time will pay the charge. Good news for the 80%, some of whom will be essential users, public transport, disabled drivers, and the like, with which I have no problem. But what about the rest? Is it fair and just to ask ~ compel ~ only 20% of road users to pay for benefits which are enjoyed

Is it just to ask 20% of road users to pay for benefits enjoyed by all?

by all? (And, if you will pardon the caricatures, that 20% will not only be the Cheshire set, commuting to plush offices, but also the

Wythenshawe set, heading for a factory bench or a hospital ward and low wages.)

Not only that; is it really an efficient way of deterring road use and reducing congestion with all its attendant problems of pollution, delays and costs? By definition 80% of the congestion is caused by the 80% who would not pay. Far better to aim at discouraging say 10% of them from using their cars when a bus might do, rather than trying to achieve the same overall cut by trying to deter 40% of the 20%.

The question of justice also comes into the equation when we look at the effects of the charge as proposed on the employment prospects of people in Northenden, and in Wythenshawe. If they go for an 8 – 4.30 job inside the M60 ring they will be paying a premium of £10 per week. But a job here outside the ring will come with in effect a £10 bonus for anyone living inside the ring, or elsewhere outside of it. Competition to be in employment will be tougher for us and our neighbours than for those who will benefit most from the improved transport.

I could go on to mention specific, detailed problems which I can foresee, such as rat running, or details of where to site park and ride car-parks or the checkpoints. We can all think of such things, and of other ways in which the charge will affect us personally, and of what bus services or other improvements we should like to see but which have not been promised. It is right to raise such points, but here and now I would rather leave it and highlight the issue of justice, because I believe that as Christians we should not only ask, How will this, or any other social or technical change, affect me? but also look at bigger issues of fairness and consideration for the disadvantaged in our communities.

So what would be just? Question one; who should be charged? Question two; where is it fair to place the ring boundaries? The first is, I believe, relatively easy to answer: apart from concessions to the disabled, &c., as already allowed for, anyone moving within the zone in any direction, whether they

The area covered by the charge will be 12 times larger than London's

are outsiders or not, should contribute or be deterred from congesting the roads. As for the boundaries, ... that needs closer consideration, since wherever they

It is important to look at bigger issues, such as justice ~ not just how will it affect me?

are drawn there will be some losers. It is worth noting that the area enclosed by the charging ring will be, I estimate, about 12 times larger than for the London Congestion Charge! And the benefits of the proposed improvements to public transport should be extended beyond the ring.