



St HELEN'S WINDOW

Changing a landscape and lives, through trees

Sophie Churchill

The National Forest Company (www.nationalforest.org) is leading the creation of a new forest, which stretches for 200 square miles north of Birmingham. Including the towns of Burton Upon Trent and Ashby de la Zouch, it is historically an area more traversed (by Romans and Vikings) than celebrated, and which suffered the demands and decline of the mining industry. In the early 1990s, the area won a national competition to create a new forest for the nation, with the aim of creating a really changed landscape on a large scale, with woodlands as the thread, joining high-quality built up areas and a range of good habitats alongside the trees. The National Forest Company is a non-departmental public body supported by central Government (the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) as a major demonstration project.

To date, we have trebled the Forest cover, from 6% to over 18%, planting mostly native broadleaves, with some conifers, and are well on the way to the ultimate target of about a third of the area being reafforested. There are something over eight million trees in the Forest. Of course, this does not mean dense trees everywhere: it may include ponds and heathland, open paths and coppiced areas, i.e. something akin to the traditional idea of a forest, with many land uses—and we have to include the M1!

Given the recent furore about publicly-owned woodlands, it's significant that most of our woodlands are privately owned, and yet provide public access: one of the debates has concerned whether the two are incompatible. However we also have much publicly-owned woodland and as landowners ourselves within the forest, the National Forest Company has to look after what we have put in. One thing you learn in forestry is that woodlands, like dogs, reflect their owners, and there are many ways to manage the same woodland. On the whole though, consistent care and having what we call 'structural variety', e.g. trees of different ages, will help wildlife flourish.

In a sense, the National Forest is a large environmental regeneration project. In the same way that you can, to an extent, change an area through putting in better transport links, you can change it through the landscape—and it tends to be cheaper! Tourism is now worth around £280m a year within the Forest, and we have just opened our first purpose-built cycling centre, which should attract 25,000 visitors a year. There is something incredibly exciting and even moving about being part of creating a new place—honouring the past but moving forwards with confidence, through tree planting, into a new economy, a new society.

Looking forward, we need to keep an eye on climate change and plant the species we believe—albeit with imperfect knowledge—will do best, as drought and possibly more weather extremes become more common. We are also busy educating our many landowners about the joys of early pruning, the only snag being when they get carried away and prune all their trees within an inch of their lives (but pruning is addictive, as I can testify!) Thankfully, wood fuel is in demand—good for early thinning, and fun in your stove. Do visit www.nationalforest.org—or better still, the Forest itself.

Sophie Churchill is Chief Executive of the National Forest Company; she attended St Helen's School, and her parents still live in Abingdon. She was appointed OBE for services to the Environment in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours List.

The Editors

Jane Baun
Alexandra Green
Sheila Hills
Silvia Joinson
David Pope

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St Helen's Church
Office: St Helen's
Court, Abingdon
OX14 5BS

Tel: 01235 520144

E-mail:
StHelensWindow
@gmail.com

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The *Window* goes Green

Jane Baun

We hope that you will enjoy reading our 'green' summer issue. *St Helen's Window* has taken a leaf (no pun intended...) from the book of the United Nations, which proclaimed 2011 to be the 'International Year of Forests'. All over the world, conferences, meetings, exhibitions, and activities such as tree planting are being organised, with the aim 'to raise awareness on sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests' (<http://www.un.org/en/events/iyofof2011/>).

Trees have been much in the news recently, with the Government's consultation concerning publicly-owned forests and their management. *Window* readers may be pleased to know that the independent panel that has been appointed to study the issue and make recommendations is headed by a Church of England bishop, the Rt Revd James Jones, bishop of Liverpool. St Boniface (d. 5 June

754) and other early European missionaries may have specialised in felling mighty trees which were objects of pre-Christian veneration, but modern bishops are much more friendly to trees. Bishop James and his panel intend to visit forests and interview activists before presenting their advice, which may well recommend, rather than the sale of public forests, the purchasing of even more woodland for the nation.

The authors of our special green issue take up the challenge of human impact on the environment and sustainability on multiple levels. On the national level, Sophie Churchill describes an audacious and most unexpected type of project: to create a modern, sustainable forest in the heart of post-industrial Britain. This is not an attempt to erase all traces of the modern world and to return the land to some golden age before the deforestation of medieval and early modern times. Rather, it is a bold experiment in working out how trees and people, with all their economic and social activities, can thrive in one another's company.

On the local level, Jill Gant takes an honest look at her own experience with environmental activism here in

Abingdon, evaluating factors that encourage enhanced environmental awareness—and also those which limit our involvement. She highlights several local environmental organisations worthy of our support, and helps us to think about our Christian commitment and what it means for good stewardship of God's creation.

Finally, on the most intimate level, that of our homes, the Joinson and Irving families encourage us to think creatively about how we can live more lightly, mindfully, and gratefully in our native environments.

Why not take a leaf from one or more of their books this summer? All of us can take some positive steps, however small, towards 'greening' our daily lives and reducing our environmental footprint. We can make changes in our homes and habits. We can attend meetings of local groups, such as the Abingdon Carbon Cutters, or support the work of

national and international groups, such as A Rocha, an explicitly Christian environmental charity which fosters community-based conservation projects all over the world.

Many summer festivals help raise awareness of environmental issues. The Greenbelt Festival, with its commitment to 'arts, faith, and justice', explores sustainability and stewardship in a Christian context over the August bank holiday at the Cheltenham Racecourse (26-29 August this year). Why not come along? Many a parish project has been hatched under the stars or under canvas in Cheltenham. (See Jane Baun if you would like to join a group going from the parish.)

Closer to home, all of us can look at our gardens and trees with new appreciation. We can go out for tree walks, whether in our own neighbourhoods or in the amazing woodlands and parks with which we are blessed nearby. Sitting and contemplating the friendly beauty of a tree is time well spent, and time spent close to God.



The Whole Planet is my Neighbour

Jill Gant

Having been involved in the Green movement for well over a decade I have been asked to contribute to this 'green' edition of the *Window*. I am not as actively involved now but I still care as deeply about the fate of our planet and I offer just a few thoughts which seem important to me as a Christian.

My awareness of the increasing crisis in our God-given earthly home gradually increased during the nineties until by 1998, soon after arriving in Abingdon, I felt impelled to act. I was grateful to discover a small number of like-minded people and we formed a small group called Abingdon EarthCare which worked very hard over several years to promote a sustainable Abingdon.

As well as initiating several projects (including assisting the Town Council to set up the Farmers' Market), we endeavoured to support each other in living more ecologically in our day to day lives. We recorded our weekly use of resources (fuel, water, car, air travel), where we shopped and so on... in order to reduce resource use and increase our use of local services. We found that this increased our motivation considerably to live more ecologically.

But, unfortunately, speaking for myself, I found that eventually I reached the limit of what I was willing to change or do without. I seemed to lack the motivation to change my life-style more radically. Not only would it have entailed forgoing cherished indulgences, I didn't want to step too far outside the social and cultural norms in which I lived. Others I have spoken to seem to have the same problem. We want the necessary changes to be made by society at large, through changes in the law which would affect everyone, or through technological advance. But we also know that those changes would not come about by themselves; it requires individuals to campaign for them, giving up time and other personal resources to do so. So living more ecologically is a spiritual matter – although it does not require 'hair shirt' living, it does

require some sacrifice. As Christians we need to apply the Love Commandments of Jesus as much to the living planet as to its people. I believe that for me to love God I need to love his Creation with all my heart, soul, mind and strength and to share God's grief when humanity damages it. Further I believe that to Love my

Neighbour means to love not only my fellow human beings but the whole living web of which we are an integral part and upon which we depend for our survival.

How do we do this? Some suggestions. First, as individuals we need to ask God's help continually in prayer to develop greater empathy for all His creatures, sensitivity to their needs, commitment to care for them and guidance for action. Secondly we need to bring the needs of the planet alongside those of its people into our public prayers on a routine basis – not just occasionally. We could also develop a greater knowledge and awareness of the wonders of the living web in its myriad forms and complexities; and how humanity's actions are interfering

and destroying them. (e.g., there are some very good local basic courses on ecology!) Then there are many opportunities in Abingdon to work with others for green changes in the wider society.


The very active Carbon Cutters Group, which meets at St Ethelwold's House every third Wednesday at 7.30 pm, offers a varied monthly programme in which speakers give tips on how to live more ecologically. Several projects are also underway, including Apple Days, Local Food Excellence Markets, Cookery Teaching at the South Abingdon Children's Centre, and a Schools Group, and many opportunities are provided for children to take part. There is also the very exciting Abingdon Hydro scheme, where volunteers are needed. This is aiming to generate electricity from the Abingdon Weir.

Contact: richard.riggs@physics.org.

Abingdon Carbon Cutters invite you to



Making Good Compost and Wormeries That Work



What can we put in our compost heap?

Robert Longstaff, of the Oxford Garden Project, will give us the lowdown on how we can make good compost and how to construct and maintain a wormery that works.

Abingdon Carbon Cutters is a "Community Action Group" aiming to help reduce the carbon footprint of Abingdon in response to climate change, and to promote a sustainable and resilient lifestyle for our town.

WEDS July 20th 7.30pm

St Ethelwold's House, 30 East St Helen Street, ABINGDON OX14 3EB
- Bring a friend. £3 donation towards costs welcome!

Continued over page



Oystercatchers at Radley lakes

The Carbon Cutters Group welcomes new members to help with existing projects and to offer new ideas. For more information, contact: sallyreynolds@btinternet.com, or Susie Howard 01235 533278, or see www.carboncutters.blogspot.com.

The development of Radley Lakes as a wild-life conservation and public amenity area is another exciting local project which the local community group, Friends of Radley Lakes, is supporting. As a wetland site it is notably biodiverse. New members are welcome. Contact the Membership Secretary, Jill Gant 01235 528929, and see www.saveradleylakes.org.uk.

Although living greener lives may mean some sacrifice initially, the joy and fulfilment of living in harmony with God's creation will far outweigh it.

Trees

The Irving Family

Elizabeth

I love looking out at the False Acacia I can see from the back of our house. It is elegant in all seasons, and provides a comfortable perch for birds, so there is often something to see in the branches. I sometimes wonder how many other people have gained pleasure from looking at it, given that our house is on the site of the old Warren Maternity Hospital. We enjoy visiting the Harcourt Arboretum through the changing seasons, although the 'dens' beneath the rhododendron canopies make perfect houses and play-spaces all year round for those who can fit!

I asked my family for some of their thoughts on trees and this is what they said:



Oak tree!
I like trees

Lee

Climbing in them. Sitting under the shade of a tree on a hot day.

We thank the trees for Damson Jam, Apple Crumble and Juicy Pears. Autumn colours at the Arboretum.

Emily (7)

Watching them swaying in the breeze.

Some are tall and some are short.

I like Braeburn trees because they give my favourite apple!

I like picking up big handfuls of leaves and kicking and throwing them.



Laura (4)

I like them because they look pretty when they have blossom on.

I like trees because I like climbing in trees.

I love trees because they give fruit that you can eat.

I like autumn leaves because they are a bit like puddles of leaves and you can splash in them.

As you can see we like fruit in our family! I'm sure there must be a spiritual message in there somewhere...

The Harcourt Arboretum is just south of Nuneham Courtenay on the A4074: it is open April-November daily 10.00-17.00; December to March, weekdays only 10.00-16.00.

The Greening of Meadowsweet

Martin Joinson

Environmentalists in Britain haven't done themselves any favours by advocating a "Live in a cave and make your own candles" sort of lifestyle which isn't terribly attractive to the mainstream.

But living in Germany showed us that you can have a 'green' lifestyle that is at least as nice as a 'brown' one.

When we got back from Germany, my wife Judy got a job in central Bristol. For a short stop-start commute, what about an electric car? At that time there were plenty of small slow things, so Judy tried the non-motorway route. It was maddeningly congested! She said she'd drive an electric car if it would do motorway speeds. At the time, the only 70mph electric car cost £100,000 so I decided to see what I could build!

Do you remember those smokey East German

Trabant cars streaming westward when the Wall came down? I now have the world's fastest *electric* Trabant (faster than when it was petrol...).

When we moved into our house, in Meadowsweet Avenue, it had an old back boiler, but there wasn't a direct replacement or obvious place for a replacement so we dithered for several years. This meant that when I decided what to do, I was more committed to doing the greenest thing I could. What we did was insulate the inside of all the external walls (house is too old for cavity walls), double glazed & insulated the porch (windows already done), beefed up the loft insulation from 2006 regulations to 2010, put a wood burning stove where the back boiler was and then supplemented that with the smallest condensing boiler we could find. Our gas use is down by more than 75% since 2007 even though we have adopted three children, and it's Ecotricity's gas

from recycled waste. Electricity was down by 30%, but is back to where it was thanks to the extra washing machine/dishwasher running and the electric car. Most of it comes from our own

3.3kw Solar panels, and the rest comes from a renewable source. Next month we get our Nissan Leaf 5 seat, 110hp, 110mile range, electric car and can give up fossil fuels for cars completely.



Fuel falling from the sky

It's nice how easy it is to beat the climate change targets that the country is failing to meet, but disappointing that the financial pay-back is poor for anything which isn't subsidised. As we found when we lived in America, cheap energy is just wasted so it isn't actually cheaper. I think that the carbon content of gas and coal should be taxed as

much as motor fuel. All brown fuels should be taxed 10% more each year, and the money used to cut other taxes or increase benefits. That way we'd all be better off and fewer people in the third world would drown or starve.

Here are two useful web-sites:

www.withouthotair.com for sensible numbers on energy use to cut through all the twaddle;

www.tearfund.org/carbonfast for a Christian perspective on what we ought to be doing.

Finally, two easy examples of greener behaviour:

- 1) stop wasting energy by ironing
- 2) in winter, walk to the pub rather than waste energy heating your house.

The Bristol Joinsons - on track to being carbon positive by Christmas.

What's on in July and August

St Helen's Church

Saturday 2 July

Help for Heroes Concert

15.00-17.00 in church

Offers of cakes and items for the tombola are welcome. Contact Sue Hartley or Jon Shaw in church

Sunday 10 July

Welcome Lunch

Open to all to greet newcomers and renew friendships

12.00 in Church Centre

Wednesday 13 July

Wednesday Church (Holy Communion),
with visitors from West Berks Mothers' Union
10.30 in CHURCH CENTRE

Tuesday 19 July

St Helen's @ Lunch

12.00 at Aston Pottery

Well worth a visit if you've not been before
For lifts/directions contact Susan Scott 01235 522960

Wednesday 20 July

Wednesday Club

Visit to Ardington & Lockinge Millenium Sundial
and Solar System Stone

Details from Sue Austin 01235 523436

Wednesday 10 August

Mothers' Union

Summer Social

14.00 - 16.00 Church Centre

Saturday 13 August

Friends of St Helen's

Summer Lunch (maximum 40)

12.30 in Church Centre

Adults £7.50 children £5.0

Contact Mike Faulkner on 01235 53188

Church in Abingdon

Thursdays 7 & 21 July

Back to 35

10.30-11.30 Baptist Church Hall

Opportunity for fellowship, chat and coffee

July 7 'Time Goes By'

Talk by Adela Thomas from Abingdon Museum

July 21 Cream Teas (hopefully in the garden)

Friday 15 July

Street Pastors Commissioning Service

19.00 at Baptist Church followed by first evening patrol

Shifts will probably start about 22.00 and continue until the early hours. They will be based at the Baptist Church and operate on a Friday and/or Saturday as the project develops

Please pray for them whilst they are out on the streets

Wednesday 27 July

Fresh Vision

19.30 at St Ethelwold's House

Led by Revd Laura Hodges

This group meets monthly with a simple service & time for discussion & reflection

35 Ock Street Summer Closure:

Saturday 23 July 12.30 closes

Wednesday 31 August 10.30 reopens

Autumn diary dates:

Saturday 10 September

Sponsored Ride and Stride

Last year, over 900 people visited

540 churches, manned by about 2000 people.

Since it started in 1986, £1.8M has been raised.

Wednesday 21-Saturday 25 September

Bible Alive—Christ Church are going to read the whole Bible aloud (day and night) to celebrate their 50th birthday

Saturday 15 October

National Pilgrimage to the Shrine of St Edward the Confessor, Westminster Abbey (all-day event; no tickets required): see Jane Baun for more information.

Solution to June's Crossword
'Gathered round the font' by Ian Miles



If you would like an event listed on this page let us know by the 5th of the previous month and we will try to include it. Contact Silvia at alanj@phonecoop.coop or tel: 01235 521247

I know that I will never see, a quiz as lovely as a tree

Quiz set by Rod Hunt ©

Each answer is the name of a tree. In most cases the common name has been used but in a small number of clues a generic (Latin) name may have been used e.g maple in one clue and acer in another.

- 1 One-time Tory politician nicknamed ‘Vulcan’ _____
- 2 The Archbishop _____
- 3 Fag end of a tree _____
- 4 “Loveliest of trees the ----- now” (*A E Housman*) _____
- 5 From ‘The Third Man’ (*Carol Reed film*) _____
- 6 Oncoming vehicle’s warning given with a sunny smile _____
- 7 Code name for WW2 floating harbours _____
- 8 ----- Blears, ----- Irvine _____
- 9 Site for lines of life, love, health, fortune, etc. _____
- 10 “Willows whiten, ----- quiver,” (*Lady of Shalott*) _____
- 11 Possible behaviour of a dog missing absent master _____
- 12 Once used as instrument for flogging _____
- 13 Love lorn in France? _____
- 14 Tit ----- ? (*G & S*) _____
- 15 Mother always said ‘Have clean one in your pocket’ _____
- 16 “The _____ bears the crown” (*carol*) _____
- 17 Sat under by blacksmiths, poetically _____
- 18 One making a plea for cut-backs _____
- 19 A brand of cider _____
- 20 Sounds like a coat or wrap that’s very non-pc these days _____
- 21 Colour of paint popular in seaside boarding houses _____
- 22 Sounds like the person next to me _____
- 23 Aircraft _____
- 24 Generally well-liked until ‘you’ went _____
- 25 Syrupy Canadian _____
- 26 All neat and tidy _____
- 27 “Hearts of _____,” *traditional song* _____
- 28 Friars _____
- 29 _____ Oyl, _____ Shreiner _____
- 30 Goes with ‘daub’ _____
- 31 _____ de Triomphe – well, almost! _____
- 32 In which the kookaburra sits _____
- 33 Warm organic stuffing material for mattress, etc. _____
- 34 A stop or embargo on the opposite of yin _____
- 35 eld, _____ eldest, _____
- 36 ‘___ Time’ (*Sigmund Romberg musical 1922*) _____
- 37 ‘Nightmare on _____ Street’ *horror movie* _____
- 38 ‘He moveth his tail like a _____’ *Job 40 v 17* _____
- 39 ‘The _____ Trees of Thika’ (*Elspeth Huxley*) _____
- 40 Swampy male leaving? _____
- 41 Hard one to crack! Against the brickwork, maybe? _____
- 42 The place to be when at the seaside _____
- 43 In which 43 above may be situated _____
- 44 ‘_____ from Amsterdam’ (*Max Bygraves song*) _____
- 45 Pop out of bottles? Do they? _____

July and August at St Helen's Church

Divine Services

Sung Eucharist with Junior Church	10.00	Every Sunday
Holy Communion	08.00	Sundays in August (During July the service is at St Nicolas')
Morning Prayer	09.10	Monday to Friday
Evening Prayer	17.10	Monday to Friday
Junior Church	10.00	Sundays
Silent Prayer	18.10	Mondays 11, 25 July
Wednesday Church	10.30	Wednesdays, Holy Communion followed by refreshments. In Church except 13 July in Church Centre Hall

Sunday Evening Services

3 July	18.30	Eucharist
10 July	18.30	Taizé
17 July	16.30	Sung Evensong
24 July	18.30	Service for Wholeness and Healing
31 July	18.30	Sung Evensong
7 August	18.30	Eucharist
14 August	18.30	Taizé
21 August	16.30	Sung Evensong
28 August	18.30	Service for Wholeness and Healing

Meetings and Gatherings all in Church Centre Hall unless marked

Baby and Toddler Group	09.30 & 11.00	Monday 4 July only
Baptism Preparation	20.00	Tuesdays 5, 19 July, lounge
Brownies	18.15	Tuesdays 5, 12 July
Clergy consultation	19.00	Wednesdays by appointment
Cubs	18.20	Wednesdays 6, 13 July
DCC meeting	19.30	Thursday 7 July
Desiring Life reading group	14.30	Tuesdays 12, 26 July – Lounge
Junior Church	10.00	every Sunday – starts in Church
Mothers' Union	14.00	Wednesday 10 August, see p. 6 for details
Wednesday Club	20.00	Wednesday 20 July, see p. 6 for details

Events (more details on page 6)

Help for Heroes Concert	15.00	Saturday 2 July
Newcomers Lunch	12.00	Sunday 10 July
St Helen's@Lunch	12.00	Tuesday 19 July, Aston Pottery
Peel attempt	15.00	Saturday 24 July, tower
FOSH lunch	12.30	Saturday 13 August



Promenade Concerts
Come and enjoy tea and cakes while listening to the lovely music

17 July 15.00 - 16.00

21 August 15.00 - 16.00

Followed by Sung Evensong at 16.30

The services and events listed here are correct at the time of going to press – please consult the weekly Newsheet if in doubt.

To arrange baptisms, weddings and funerals contact the Church Office.
Clergy are available in the Church Office between 19.00 - 20.00 on a Wednesday.
Call the office to book an appointment.

Rector:	The Revd Dr Charles Miller
Assisting Priest (NSM):	The Revd Tim Hewes
Curates (NSM):	The Revd Dr Simon Thorn, The Revd Dr Jane Baun, The Revd SokHan Yong
Director of Music:	Christopher Fletcher-Campbell
Parish Administrator:	Linda Barker

St Helen's Church Office: St Helen's Court, Abingdon, OX14 5BS
01235 520144
Normal opening hours 09.00 to 14.15 Mon, Tues, Weds; 09.15 to 14.15 Fri
E-mail: administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk
www.sthelens-abingdon.org.uk