



# St HELEN'S WINDOW

## Learning for Life

John Wesson

**N**owadays children's toys are powered by batteries and incorporate all kinds of sophisticated electronic gadgetry, but older readers will recall the sturdy little clockwork toys of childhood. You wound them up with the big key and they ran about the floor until after a while they got slower and slower, then finally expired.

It is curious how many people hold a clockwork toy idea of learning. They seem to think a person was wound up by their education in school, and then maybe college, and that somehow keeps them going for the next however many years of their lives. Of course the education of children is profoundly important and we are right to put serious resources into it from an early age, but it's only a start, laying the foundation. We go on learning. There is always something new to grasp. We never arrive as fully educated people.

That is why the notion of adult learning or life-long learning has been stressed in recent times. Those who missed out on school qualifications can have another chance. Those who wish to change their career and take new subjects can have the opportunity. Those who simply want to branch out into new fields of knowledge for fun can find adult learning courses to expand their horizons. Life-long learning is a healthy activity.

None of this should be a surprise in the Christian church where the idea of being disciples, i.e. learners, is frequently urged. The New Testament can speak tellingly of learning Christ (Eph. 4.20) and we don't do that by vaguely recalling a few things from Sunday School or a confirmation course many years ago. The L-plates are meant to stay on and help us go deeper in faith and action every step of the way.

So as we celebrate many aspects of education in this issue, let's keep adult learning in mind. This may act as an encouragement to sign up to an evening class in something that takes your fancy - whether it is particle physics, flower arranging or photography is not important. In the church community it might be a decision to try an Alpha course or the Tuesday afternoon reading group. It is never too late - learning is life-long.

Tony Benn may or may not be your favourite politician, but you have to admire the energy and enthusiasm he has retained. In the 1965 edition of *Who's Who* his entry reads Anthony Wedgwood-Benn ... educated Westminster School, New College, Oxford, MA 1949... . But ten years later in 1975 the entry changes. It starts the same but when it gets to education he puts "still in progress". Somewhere along the way he discovered life-long learning. May we too be those whose education is still in progress.

### The Editors

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## My Hobby and Me

### A Pastime or a Waste of Time?

**K**ing Henry the Eighth once wrote in the words of a song:  
*"Pastime with good company, I love and shall until I die  
 ... For idleness is chief mistress of vices all  
 Then who can say but mirth and play is best of all."*

So I feel royally blessed that I fill some of my hours with several pastimes. A number of these involve sport such as golf, badminton, cricket, swimming and walking. Another great pleasure is singing with various choral groups. These all involve "good company" as King Henry recommended. However, my other pastime of doing crosswords is really a solitary occupation. Although, on our frequent visits to Bristol, Janet (a clue to my identity) and I work together in aiming to complete the crossword between the Wantage junction and the M32 junction of the M4.

Unlike the USA and Canada where most crosswords are of the plain variety and rather large in size (of course), I prefer the cryptic crossword and the harder the better. I remember as a young boy my father completing The Daily Telegraph crossword on most days. I took an interest, learnt how the different clue types work and got the bug. On reflection I think sometimes at university it was more important to complete the crossword than to listen to the lecture. It is a challenge to pit your wits against the compiler and, rather like a jigsaw, get the final satisfaction of filling the grid successfully. Sometimes it takes a little while to "get in tune with" a different compiler in a different newspaper or some of the more difficult puzzles that I attempt.

The whole process could be viewed as a waste of valuable time. However, I still get a kick out of finishing a puzzle and I'm sure it keeps the brain cells active. I have built up a wide knowledge of words (not always knowing their meaning) and yet I never ever read a book - Janet sometimes says that I read Chambers Dictionary or Bradford.

The compiling of crosswords is a relatively new venture for me and I have set less than twenty – mostly for The Window. Some of my early efforts were probably a little too difficult and I have tried to make them more solvable although I continue to have a set of thematic clues/answers in each puzzle. A number of crossword compilers set their puzzles under a pseudonym. I have adopted the name Eccles although I will never aspire to the dizzy heights of Azed, Ximenes and the like. I'm not totally sure why I chose Eccles – two likely sources are the name of a character in The Goon Show and the name of my original home village Tug O War team which was Felton Eccles.

Some of you who know me will realise that my passion for crosswords creeps into my general conversation and thought processes. Early visits from Lindsay's (another clue) friends needed her around to act as interpreter. Also incoming phone calls are passed on to the recipient via a cryptic message as to the caller – eg the Old King for Sally Nicholson-Cole. Even when playing badminton certain scores automatically trigger a cryptic connotation to me. There are the more obvious ones like 5-6 (pick up sticks), 6-3 (three squadron), 6-5 (special) and 9-10 (a big fat hen) and then the more elusive such as Love-1 (ice cream), Love-2 (go awandering), 1-4 (a Welsh town) and 8-2 (Brute).

Happy solving!

*Eccles*

### A prayer for Schools and Colleges

Heavenly Father, we offer you this prayer for our Abingdon schools and colleges;  
 that those who teach may be endowed with the love and understanding  
 we see revealed in the life and example of Jesus Christ;  
 that children may be guided in the way that leads to the abundant life which Jesus came to bring us all;  
 that as they grow in knowledge they may also grow in grace;  
 that students may accept with gratitude and humility your gifts of mind and the opportunity to use them;  
 that the Spirit of Truth may use their studies to enlarge their understanding of your  
 purpose for mankind, made known in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

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## Memories of Teachers

**M**y love of nature, outside life, music and French came from Mr. & Mrs. Bremner, my Primary School teachers. P.E. lessons were outside in the fields. Biology lessons involved studying creatures living in the woods or by the canal. Music lessons meant sitting cross-legged on the carpet in their beautiful lounge and singing while she played the grand piano and we played instruments. Mr. Bremner had French ancestors and his school dinners were unexpectedly tasty. My French was high level for a 9 year old and I loved my French lessons, even when my exam paper was torn up for signalling to a friend for a pencil sharpener. My joy at their school encouraged me to become a teacher, a job I enjoyed for over 32 years.

*Sue Austin*

*“Concentrated Sulphuric Acid and Potassium Permanganate are both strong oxidising agents, so if we mix them, we may expect a vigorous reaction.”* said the smiling, one-armed young man at the front of my chemistry class. What happened next remains in my mind and also remained on the ceiling of the chemistry laboratory for the rest of the term. As the first few drops of the strong acid landed on the purple crystals an ominous fizzing began, and when more was added there was a sudden whoosh and a flash and dissolved potassium permanganate shot up and stained the ceiling with an intriguing pink pattern, which remained as a reminder of what fun chemistry lessons could be for the rest of the term.

The smiling young man, who had been born with only one arm, but still managed to get not only a good science degree from Cambridge but a Blue for lacrosse at the same time, taught me that the pursuit of knowledge is an end in itself, and that experimenting and testing life and nature are what we are here to do. Since we have been given brains which are able to investigate nature, it's our responsibility to use them in this way – not something we might do for personal gain, or competitive advantage, but a duty owed to the One who supplied us both with the brains and with the endlessly intriguing nature on which we can test and stretch them.

This was the most valuable lesson that I learned at school.

*Tom Hardy*

**T**he older I get the more I appreciate the education I received in the 1930s at a co-education Grammar School (a rarity in the 30s and particularly good for me, an only child and a girl at that!). The staff was, for the most part, of experienced and dedicated teachers; for me particularly inspiring was the senior History mistress., Miss Campion (no married women in those distant days!) brought History alive, clothing the dates, great events and international machinations etc with humanity; and along the way describing many of the great European cities from her personal travels; so not only feeding my love of her subject, which I eventually read at university and taught, but also my love of travel which still endures. I have just returned from the United States!

*Dorothy Dawson*

**M**y teachers were mostly memorable for being at least slightly odd, and several were extremely odd. The teacher who had the most profound effect upon me, though, was one of the less quirky. Mr Watts taught my last two years in junior school. He encouraged us to give talks to our classmates, an audience as vicious as any northern night club, thus stopping me getting rattled when addressing large groups. He encouraged independence and engineering by letting us dig subterranean bird-hides rivalling the Somme trenches in the school garden. Most importantly he let us write and perform daft sketches, which instilled a sense of humour which preserved my sanity through 35 years in the British motor industry.

*Mike Austin*

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## Scouting - what does it mean to me?

### **What image do you conjure up, when you think of a Scout?**

The word "Scout" always seems to provoke a reaction. Whenever you mention Scouting to someone he always seems to have something to say about it. Some will begin "*When I was a Scout...*" and tell you about some memory of their time as a Scout. Others will make an unhelpful comment, perhaps along the lines of "*dib, dib, dib, dob, dob, dob,*" or allude to the image of a young boy wearing shorts, long socks and a floppy hat saluting the Union Jack.

### **What did I get out of Scouting?**

In my time in Scouting and Guiding I found adventure, developed a love of the outdoors, had the opportunity to travel throughout the UK and abroad and had the chance to hang out with many good friends. To me, the strong friendships I have made through Scouting are even more important than the adventures along the way. It was through Scouting that I met my husband, Phil. Many of my closest friends are connected to Scouting in some way. Of my son's godparents, two have a connection to Scouting: one is an Explorer Scout Leader, and the other went to Cubs with my husband! Scouting is a great way to meet likeminded people, even when you re-locate to a different town or a different continent.

Through Scouting I learnt that it is OK to go for it in life. Granted, I didn't go on to present a TV series or land on the moon (207 out of 312 astronauts were Scouts!) I did learn to keep on challenging myself, be it by going to new places, or trying new things. As an Explorer Scout Leader, I encourage my Explorer Scouts (14 – 18 year olds) to challenge themselves. For some, staying away from home or travelling abroad is a challenge, for others trying a new activity or meeting new people provides a challenge in itself.

As a teenager, I had many opportunities to go camping. One of the best experiences we were given was the chance to camp independently of our leaders. We planned what we wanted to do, what we wanted to eat, and for a weekend, we were essentially self-sufficient. It wasn't until I left home and went to University that I realised just how useful these skills really are! For example, at camp, I learnt how to cook several simple, filling and inexpensive meals. In many ways, this gave me a head start over some of my peers. Some of my first flatmates had clearly never been near a kitchen. In the first week of term, the microwave caught on fire when a metal fork was left in it, the oven got covered in plastic when one of my flatmates forgot to take the frozen pizza out of its wrapper first!

Thanks to Scouting and Guiding, I have had the chance to try a range of adventurous activities including sailing, climbing and archery to name but a few. With the support of friends, I faced my fear of heights and went down a 30 foot abseil. I have since had the opportunity to run abseiling sessions for groups of Cubs, Scouts, Brownies and Guides. The buzz you get from watching a frightened face turn into a smiling one is phenomenal.

In 2007, I took a party of Explorer Scouts to my native Yorkshire to complete the Three Peaks Challenge – climbing and walking between the three highest Peaks in Yorkshire in just twelve hours. The Explorers were a credit to themselves, persevering despite dismal weather conditions, including heavy fog! Their efforts raised money to support Scouting and Sobell House Hospice.

### **What can you put into Scouting?**

Scouting and Guiding are both run by volunteers, without whom young people, would not have the chance to experience the things that I have enjoyed so much. One of the biggest myths about Scouting is that groups are closing down due to a lack of young people wanting to become members. Nothing could be further from the truth; Scouting in the UK is a growing movement and we currently have 30,000 young people on our waiting lists simply because we do not have enough adults to help out.

I'm sure there are people in the St Helen's community who have something to give, whether it be sharing a skill or hobby with a group of young people aged somewhere between six and twenty-five, helping out at a Unit or helping support the movements in another way. Perhaps taking on admin, driving a minibus, or offering to cook for an indoor weekend, to free up leaders, so they can spend more time with the young people. I can promise anybody who helps Scouting and Guiding in any way, will encounter fun, laughter and the support of friends along the way!

*Linda Cole*

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## St. Helen's is pleased to welcome...

**BOB REITEMEIER** the Chief Executive Officer of the The Children's Society.

**T**he Children's Society was founded in 1881 and ever since it has reached out to forgotten children who face danger and disadvantage in their daily lives; often children who are unable to find the help or understanding they need anywhere else. Over the years their response has changed according to need but basing their work on the Christian principles of love, justice and forgiveness, they currently support children in trouble with the law, young runaways at risk on the street, disabled children who face exclusion and young refugees rebuilding their lives in the UK.

Bob Reitemeier will be sharing this work with us in St. Helen's on **Wednesday October 21<sup>st</sup>**. He will have the opportunity to talk about the exciting work the Children's Society is developing in response to the recent report *"A Good Childhood: Searching for Values in a Competitive Age"* (already brought to our notice by Joan King in the July/August WINDOW). There will be copies of this report available to purchase that evening and a variety of other information about their work.

Do make this evening widely known to others in the wider community who care about children today.

## Reflections on life as an Egyptian Christian

**M**y name is George and I work for SAT-7, the Christian satellite TV network for the Middle East and North Africa. I was born in 1978 during a time when tensions were increasing between the different religious groups in Egypt. From being a tolerant country where people from different backgrounds could live together peacefully, Egypt was turning into one in which appearing religious (expressed in different ways including how people dressed and how fervently they rejected other religions) was becoming the main focus of many.

In such an atmosphere, people were ready to believe the worst about those who did not share their beliefs. I remember at school hearing my non-Christian classmates talking about the rituals Christians have in their churches, wondering if they slaughter infants and drink their blood, or saying that Christians are not clean because they do not practise religious washings. They also thought poorly of us for being willing to eat pork. Some of these misconceptions originated from small, out of context pieces of information they heard about Christian worship and certain terminologies used in churches, such as "eating the body" and "drinking the blood" in the Communion.

I remember the frustration I felt hearing such things, feeling deeply misunderstood and rejected. In church when we talked about loving our enemies, and prayed for our country, for its peace and prosperity, I wanted so badly to invite my classmates to listen and see for themselves so that they would know that we are also humans, sharing the same dreams and aiming for the same future. This hope of mine never came true, as unfortunately the church in a sense hid behind its high walls and closed doors and looked suspiciously on any strangers who might enter in. Any manifestation of Christianity was not allowed outside churches. We were completely ignored by the media, except at Christmas and Easter when the government-owned TV channel would broadcast parts of the Coptic Orthodox Mass. I remember reading the text crawl going along the screen during the Christmas mass saying, *"We wish our Christians brothers and sisters a happy Christmas,"* but that was the only mention of us all year! We did have some Christian Arabic radio services broadcasting from Monte Carlo for one hour every night. Although the audio quality was very bad, we would still gather as a family around the radio to listen to it, mainly for the pride of being recognized in a public medium such as radio.

Then in 1996 we had Christian TV (SAT-7), and for the first time the church's high walls and closed doors were not an obstacle any more. Millions were having the chance to see and hear Christians while they worshipped, talked and prayed for everybody. My dream of standing in the highest place at my school, to shout the truth about who am I as a Christian, to tell everybody that what they think about me is not true, was finally achieved with a signal that carries the message of hope and love to the homes of millions. For me, and for millions of Christians in the Middle East, SAT-7 is the window that lets the world look at the church and see that we have great love for everybody, common dreams of a better future for our region and an important role to play as citizens of this area.

For more information about SAT-7, visit [www.sat7trust.org](http://www.sat7trust.org), phone 01249 765865, or see March 2009 WINDOW.

# St. Helen's Church and Church in Abingdon News

## St. Helen's Church

**October 4th Abingdon Fair** starts to set up so allow extra time to get to church!

**Saturday October 10th Harvest celebration** for the under 5s in Church 10.30-12.00

**October 11th Harvest Festival** Bring and Share Harvest Supper in Church Centre 7.30pm

### Desiring Life Reading Group.

Church Centre Lounge 2.30 -3.45pm  
October meetings on 13th and 27th  
Leaflets with details of **Autumn Sermon Series** and on **Desiring Life Group** are available in the church or church centre

### October 17th Wedding Fair

Church & Church Centre 10.0am -12.30pm  
Reception for newly weds October 17th in church centre lounge at 7.00

### October 18th Education Sunday

**October 18th Promenade Concert** with tea 3.00pm Brass Bonanza by Bloxham School Brass Ensemble, followed by Choral evensong at 4.30

### What Makes a good Childhood?

Wednesday October 21st 7.30 in church.  
Admission £5. See page 5 for details.

### Wednesday Club

October 21st Bring and Share Harvest Supper with Entertainment

### St Michael's

**Wednesday October 28th Lunch Club** meets at 12.30 .2 Course meal for £3.75. Contact 522591 or 538758 if you would like to come

### Concerts at St Michael's

**October 4th at 8.00** Oxford Isis Orchestra  
Tickets £8, £6 concessions and under 16 free  
**October 10th at 7.30** Liskarette Male Voice Choir from Cornwall (Organised jointly with **St Nicolas**)  
Tickets £8.00, £6.00 concession from Mostly Books or Geoffrey Currey (01865 391365)

## Church in Abingdon

### Thursday October 1st ALPHA.

New course starts with introductory dinner and jazz evening at the Guildhall. To reserve your FREE ticket call 555985. For more details contact the course organiser Jane Wyatt on 559112 or jane\_wyatt@hotmail.com.

Follow-up Sessions at the St Helen's Church Centre will be on Thursdays October 8th -December 17th

### Sunday October 4th Annual Celebration of the Church in Abingdon.

4.00pm at St Edmund's (so NO evening service at St Helen's). There will be an environmental theme to the service which last about an hour. Refreshments afterwards and a display of stalls

### Abingdon Emergency Foodbank

Please continue to contribute. This month they would like puddings and long life fruit juice. Further information from Jenny Corps on 07925 309042 or e-mail foodbank@cca.uk.net

Future dates to note

**Sunday November 1st** 3.00 Deanery Tea followed by Choral Evensong at 4.30

#### Speaker:

**REVEREND HENRY L KIRK**  
*Chaplain of Abingdon School*

#### Director of Studies:

**REV DR ROBIN GIBBONS**  
*Departmental Lecturer in  
Theology and Religious Studies, OUDCE*

This course is one of a series of three linked day schools. The other two day schools are:

**The Passion of Christ in Art**  
**Saturday 23 January 2010**

**Eight Saints in Art**  
**Saturday 20 February 2010**

These day schools can be taken individually or you can enrol for all three at the same time - see the enrolment form over page for details. Phone 01865 270368 for a full programme for each day school.

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Department for  
Continuing  
Education



## The Virgin Mary in Art

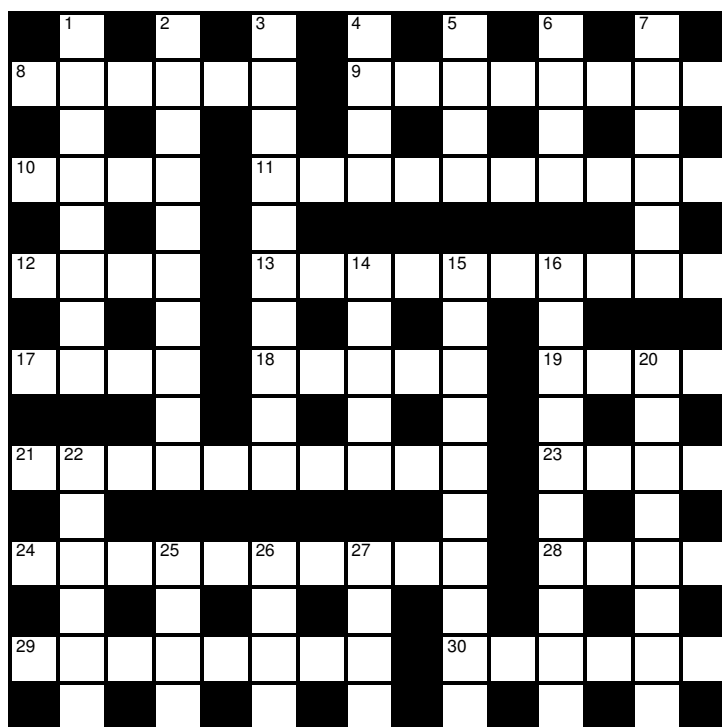
**Saturday 31 October 2009**

The first in a series of three linked day schools to be held at Ewert House, Ewert Place, Summertown, Oxford



Across

- 8 Of singers in church, by mouth (6)
- 9 Cut matter of love and spiritual outreach (8)
- 10 Greek characters 'trenchermen'? (4)
- 11 Global conflict made retired widow rail (5,3,2)
- 12 Dominic's coveting Cowley-built runabout (4)
- 13 Dylan's first good blues about 11Ac buzz-bombs (10)
- 17 Boast about garb (4)
- 18 Musical focus of the church body! (5)
- 19 Forbid monarch to handle currency (4)
- 21 Not returning 'on cushions' to Brunel terminus (10)
- 23 Government rules left to a Scots lawyer (4)
- 24 Lob the Bish' suitably Scriptural password (10)
- 28 Bygone Rome's infamous fiddler (4)
- 29 Without fuss as to how collection is taken (2,1,5)
- 30 Peppery old believer? (6)



Down

- 1 Contrite hymnodist sounds more amusing (8)
- 2 Faith doing nicely on grant-awarding body (5,2,3)
- 3 Newly weds left out such a clue and faltered (6,4)
- 4 Our big-sister periodical could be closed (4)
- 5 Spotted as a former Sweeney Todd client? (4)
- 6 Exotic continent is coming up in questionable old film (4)
- 7 In dispute over oars (6)
- 14 Should be end of notion (5)
- 15 Vestry storage unit was left since then (5,5)
- 16 Short line on compiler of old imperial capital (10)
- 20 Cinema update somehow recalling Jezreel (8)
- 22 Capital points on couple of articles (6)
- 25 Rolls from around 35 Ock St? (4)
- 26 Nothing wrong with 'a little profit!' (4, abbr.)
- 27 Sir Anthony's original garden (4)

Set by  
Ian Miles

## Answers to last month's quiz: *St. Helen's Church* by Rod Hunt

In this quiz each clue was a familiar double-worded item, person, place or saying - the first letter of the *first* word was **H** and the first letter of the *second* word was **C** as in **St Helen's Church**. e.g. *Posh frocks - Haute Couture*

- |                       |                     |                   |                       |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 high chair          | 2 hard cheese       | 3 hokey cokey     | 4 half cut            |
| 5 heroic couplet      | 6 hospital corners  | 7 hen coop        | 8 Henry Cooper        |
| 9 human cannonball    | 10 hermit crab      | 11 half crown     | 12 hunting crop       |
| 13 Hungry Caterpillar | 14 hair curlers     | 15 Hot Chocolate  | 16 hot cross (bun)    |
| 17 hard core          | 18 Hilary Clinton   | 19 human chain    | 20 half cock          |
| 21 Home Counties      | 22 house call       | 23 haute cuisine  | 24 happy clappy       |
| 25 horse chestnut     | 26 high church      | 27 high class     | 28 Hereford Cathedral |
| 29 Hobson's choice    | 30 hansom cab       | 31 habeus corpus  | 32 Harry Corbett      |
| 33 Holby City         | 34 hydrogen cyanide | 35 Howard Carter  | 36 Halley's Comet     |
| 37 high command       | 38 heavenly choir   | 39 highly charged | 40 High Chaparral     |

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## October at St. Helen's Church

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### Divine Services

Morning Prayer	09.10 every weekday
Evening Prayer	17.10 every weekday
Sung Eucharist	10.00 every Sunday
Harvest Festival	10.00 Sunday 11th,
Taizé Service	18.30 Sunday 11th
Evensong	16.30 Sunday 18th
Celtic Service	18.30 Sunday 25th
Holy Communion	10.30 Wednesday 14th in Church Centre
Silent Prayer	18.10 Monday 5th & Monday 19th
Marriage	12.00 Saturday 3rd & 14.00 Sat 24th

### Meetings and Gatherings

CiA Annual Gathering 16:00	Sunday 4th at St. Edmund's
PCC Standing Committee	Monday 5th
Mothers' Union	20.00 Tuesday 6th
Darby and Joan	13.00 Tuesday 13th
<i>Desiring Life</i>	14.30 Tuesday 13th & Tuesday 27th
Brownies	Tuesday 13th, 20th & 27th
Beavers and Cubs	17.15 Weds. 7th, 14th & 21st in Church Centre
The Children's Society Exec.	19.30 Wednesday 21st in Church
Baptism Preparation	20.00 Wednesday 7th & Wednesday 14th
Wednesday Club	20.00 Wednesday 21st in Church Centre
Museum Friends' Meeting	19.00 Thursday 1st in Church
Alpha Launch & Supper	19.30 Thursday 1st at Guildhall
Alpha Course	19.30 - 22.00 Every Thursday in Church Centre

### Events

Visiting Bellringers	14.15 Saturday 3rd
Visit to Argentan	Thursday 8th to Monday 12th
Harvest Supper	19.30 Sunday 11th
Wedding Fair	Saturday 17th
Newly Weds' Reception	19.00 Saturday 17th

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To arrange baptisms, weddings and funerals contact the Parish Office.

Clergy are available in the Church Office between 19.00 - 20.00pm on a Wednesday.  
Call the office to book an appointment.

Rector:	The Revd. Dr. Charles Miller
Assisting Priest (NSM):	The Revd. Tim Hewes
Curate (SNM):	The Revd. Dr. Simon Thorn
Director of Music:	Christopher Fletcher-Campbell
Parish Administrator:	Linda Barker

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### "3rd Sunday" Music at St. Helen's

Music and Tea at 15.00, Choral  
Evensong at 16.30.

18th Oct: *Brass Bonanza*  
with Bloxham School Brass Ensemble  
A selection of solos and group items for  
trumpets and trombone.

15th Nov: *Cello Collection*  
Music for up to 8 cellos. NB: Sung rather  
than Choral Evensong on this occasion.

20th Dec: *Christmas Readings and Carols*

17th Jan: *Come and Sing Messiah*

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

01235 520144

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[www.sthelens.abingdon.org.uk](http://www.sthelens.abingdon.org.uk)

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