



St HELEN'S WINDOW

The Sharing of Gifts

Charles Miller

Between 16 and 19 September, Pope Benedict XVI will make his much-publicised state visit to Scotland and England. He will come as successor to Pope Gregory the Great, who fifteen centuries ago sent the Benedictine monk Augustine to evangelize the 'Angles'. He will also come as spiritual father of over a billion Roman Catholics worldwide. Despite centuries of Protestant suspicion and, more recently, scandals that have weakened the moral credibility of his church from within, this is an historic occasion in which we all have a stake.

The present pope was an innovative voice at the Second Vatican Council, whose Decree on Ecumenism opened a hitherto unimaginable era in discussion and bridge-building between churches. The Church of England became a key partner in such dialogue after 1966 when Pope Paul VI and Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey committed their respective churches to a search for full unity in faith and sacraments founded 'on the Gospels and on the ancient common traditions'. Agreed statements began to appear which tackled the range of disputed issues between our two churches. The breadth of themes, the persevering commitment, and the actual degree of unity in faith that they represent are remarkable. A statement from 1991 reminds us that the fruit of ecumenical discussion is not just the overcoming of obstacles but 'the sharing of gifts'.

The Pope's visit this month will celebrate perhaps the greatest gift that the Church of England has shared with the Roman Catholic Church since the time of our tragic separation from one another. In Birmingham, on Sunday 19 September, the Pope will beatify John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801-1890). Newman was one of the most brilliant figures of the Victorian age, embodying its most characteristic sensibilities yet also laying creative foundations for Christians of the twentieth century and beyond. Though Newman's witness, first as an Anglican, and then as a Roman Catholic, was dogged by controversy, towards the end of his life his achievements began to be recognised, and when he died, Britain mourned one of its greatest and best.

Newman's conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1845 shocked his Anglican comrades. But with prophetic foresight, one close friend, Edward Pusey, wrote this: 'It is perhaps the greatest event which has happened since the communion of the Churches has been interrupted that such an one, so formed in our Church ... should be transplanted to theirs. If anything could open their eyes to what is good in us, or soften in us any wrong prejudices against them, it would be the presence of such an one, nurtured and grown to such ripeness in our Church, and now removed to theirs.' His words still stand, and that is why we too should rejoice with our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters on 19 September.

STOP PRESS: *Newman will be honoured further in Dorchester Abbey on 2 October, when his sublime poem "The Dream of Gerontius", set to music by Sir Edward Elgar, will be performed by the Newman Singers and Orchestra, a group of musicians specially brought together for this occasion. All proceeds will go to the Kianda (Kenya) Foundation, a charity seeking to better the social and educational conditions of women and children in Kenya. Tickets are available from David Pope (532120), or the website www.wegotickets.co.uk*

The Editors

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From the Editor

Jane Baun

I feel honoured to be taking over from so capable and creative an Editor as Jeanne Wesson. I would like to add my thanks to those of Silvia, writing for the entire editorial and production team. They have set a high standard for *St Helen's Window* as a parish magazine, in both content and presentation, which I am keen to uphold. But a parish magazine belongs finally to you, the readers. We are always looking to widen our base of contributors and the range of perspectives represented in the *Window*. Looking out of our windows, we are hoping to develop a regular forum on issues of common interest (in the church and the world), to raise our awareness of local, national and global affairs, to deepen our sense of Christian discipleship, spirituality, and witness, to celebrate our Christian heritage and make it better known, and to highlight and support all the amazing things going on in and around Abingdon.

This is your *Window*—please do write in with your experiences, perspectives, and thoughts.

Jeanne Wesson, former Editor in Chief.

Silvia Joinson

The eagle-eyed amongst you may have noticed that Jeanne's name did not appear on the front page of the July/August *Window*. Strictly speaking it should have done, as that was the last issue she compiled. Jeanne began contributing to the *Window* in 2004 and soon joined the editorial team. In 2002 Arthur Morgan had taken over responsibility for layout, but was also chairing the editorial group and chasing copy. Jeanne gradually took over the latter responsibilities and spread tasks around the committee. She kept us on our toes, made us think ahead and develop themes for the double issues or series to run over several months. She also invited contributions from her wide circle of contacts. We enjoyed her hospitality for meetings and the biennial Christmas party she organised for our distributors. Jeanne worked closely with Arthur and they had agreed to retire together in 2010. After Arthur's sudden death last May, Jeanne continued until the production process was once more running smoothly. We will miss her vision and encouragement and hope she will contribute again in the future.

Alpha 2010

Jane Baun

Following the success of previous years' Alpha courses, the combined congregations of St Helen's, St Nicolas', and St Michael's, alongside most of our fellow churches in Abingdon, plan to offer an Alpha course again this Autumn. The course will be held at the St Helen's Church Centre, facilitated by our second parish curate, the Revd Dr Jane Baun. After a gala joint opening dinner at the Dil Raj restaurant on 27 September (details on page 6, Church in Abingdon news), our churches' Alpha will run for ten successive Thursday evenings, from 30 September to 2 December. This year's Alpha aims to offer a smaller number of participants a more intimate group experience. Enrolment will be on a 'first-come, first-served' basis. If you are interested in participating as a course member or in helping with hospitality, or have any questions or thoughts, please contact Jane, through the Parish Office, or by e-mail: alpha.sthelens@gmail.com. If you know anyone who might be interested, please do speak to him or her and encourage an email or a telephone call to Jane. And of course, we will need all of your prayers throughout the ten weeks, to keep the whole operation afloat!

Our woman in Bristol, Lindsay Dale, muses on upcoming discipleship training ...



“You then, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well.”

(2 Timothy 2:1-2)

These words from Paul’s letter to Timothy provide a fairly neat summary of what the next year of my life is going to be all about. In September, I and around sixty other graduates nationwide will begin a discipleship training program with the organisation UCCF (Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship), called ‘Relay’. UCCF supports student-led Christian Unions across the country in their mission to make disciples who will boldly live and speak for Jesus, so that all students might hear and respond to the incredibly good news of the Gospel. As a ‘Relay’ worker I will be living in Bristol and supporting the mission of the CU at the University of the West of England (UWE).

A focus of the year is on coming to a richer understanding of God’s grace in a personal and practical day-to-day way (as in verse 1, above). Each week

I will have time set aside for personal study of God’s word, but learning to trust in Him will also be integral to the missionary-style way of life. As the year is completely voluntary, I am forced to be reliant on God’s grace and provision for the funds needed. A large portion of a typical week will be committed to what Paul describes as the entrusting/teaching of the Gospel to other believers (verse 2) - running Bible studies for the CU leadership team at UWE, meeting up one-to-one with girls to encourage them in their faith, speaking at CU meetings and other evangelistic events, and being taught and held accountable through the mentoring I’ll receive from the UCCF staff worker for my area. Ministry among students is something I believe to be incredibly valuable, not only because of the profound impact that involvement in the CU has had on my own faith, but also because the university setting offers such unique and wonderful opportunities for intimate, wide-reaching and long-term mission.

If you are interested in finding out more, would be excited to hear about the work God will be doing through me and others in Bristol throughout this year, or want to partner with me by lending your support both prayerfully and/or financially, then I would love to hear from you (telephone: 07875 662478; email: linds_dale@hotmail.com).

More Good News

Silvia Joinson

In March 2010, in the run-up to the General Election, *The Window* included an article, ‘Good News’, describing various Christian groups involved in national politics. Recently we have received this via e-mail from the organisation ‘Christians in Parliament’ (CiP):

“Thank God for the large intake of new Christian MPs. To recall the words of a Christian Member who has been here for over twenty years, ‘God has brought in so many believers. I’ve never known a more exciting time to be a Christian in Parliament.’ Pray that these new MPs would strengthen and deepen their Christian identity, that they would be led by the Holy Spirit and rooted in the Word of God, and that they would be protected.”

Oberammergau 2010

Sue Pemberton



Backdrop for a Communion Service

Here's a question: what do a psychologist, a flight attendant, an optician, a horticultural engineer, a carpenter, a forester, an innkeeper, a dentist, a wood carver and a lawyer have in common? Answer: they are all residents or natives of the Bavarian village of Oberammergau, who have set aside their normal lives to take part in the 2010 Oberammergau Passion Play. The story of Oberammergau is of course well known: in 1633 the village was beset by plague and the villagers vowed to perform a Passion play every ten years if God would spare them. The first play was performed in 1634, and has continued ever since. To take part, you must have either been born in Oberammergau or lived there for at least twenty years.

Through a friend, I was lucky enough last June to be able to join a group of about forty from the Midlands for a week in Austria and Germany. For the first five nights we stayed in the village of Maria Alm in Austria's Salzburg province. Maria Alm is itself a pilgrimage village, and our hotel was a pilgrim inn dating back to the 1500s. During our four days there we enjoyed various sightseeing trips, walks in the mountains, an Austrian folk evening and a wonderful Mozart dinner concert in Salzburg, all accompanied by much fun and laughter and the joy of reaffirming old friendships and making new.

However, we were very conscious of the real purpose of our trip. Our party leader offered three talks on the Passion Play, two of them in the course of Holy Communion services. The first of these was held in the open air, on

a grassy alpine pasture at the top of the gondola ride above Maria Alm, with a stunning mountain view as a backdrop. The second was held in the village's Roman Catholic church which generously offers itself to groups of any Christian denomination wishing to hold a service, ours being celebrated by a woman Anglican priest from our party. We all felt very privileged to be welcomed in this way, and I found both services very moving in different ways.

We transferred to Oberammergau itself for the last two nights, attending the Play on the Sunday as the climax to our trip. Many of us attended a talk in the morning which made it clear that performing the Play is regarded as an act of worship rather than a theatrical performance. Also, it's not just a case of trotting out 'the Play' every ten years. Each time, much thought, study and prayer is given as to how to make the message of the Passion relevant and accessible to the people of the day.

I can't begin to describe the performance. The staging, acting, singing and music were superb and it was hard to believe that the performers are essentially amateurs. I found the crowd scenes particularly powerful, and the transformation of the Palm Sunday crowd to the Good Friday crowd chilling. The final scene of the Resurrection was very moving – no stunning theatricals, just candles lit amongst the crowd on stage and a simple appearance of Jesus. I felt that I had really experienced Holy Week as never before. Aided by the text of the Play, a beautiful photographic book and a CD of the music, I will return to it many times, particularly during Holy Week.

It's probably too late to go this year, but start planning for 2020!



Passion Play Theatre

The Fall of the Berlin Wall

Val Casemore

In 1981 Colin and I went to stay for a week with some Army friends stationed in West Berlin. We were astonished and appalled by the sight of the Berlin Wall and how awful the whole situation was. West Berlin was a modern vibrant city just like those in Britain with lots of shops and cars and cheerful faces. One day we went in our car through Checkpoint Charlie (an adventure in itself which took hours!) into East Berlin which was like entering a different world. It was drab and depressing with few shops, all the historic buildings decrepit and a few Trabant cars on the roads. Driving down the Unter den Linden was not an inspiring experience. It felt very sinister and we were greatly relieved to get back to the west.

This May we decided to revisit Berlin to see what it is like "after the Wall". What a difference! There has been an amazing transformation in twenty years and apart from a small "museum" section of the Wall you would never know it had been there. In its place are squares and buildings and the eastern part of the city is beautiful with the Brandenburg Gate, cathedrals, opera house and Museum Island all restored to their former glory. The Unter den Linden is a bustling avenue with beautiful shops.

We then travelled by train to Dresden, which is still recovering from the extensive bombing in the war and the effects of forty years of communism. Again, and in only twenty years, most of the buildings have been restored and it is a wonderful historic city of beautiful churches, palaces and museums packed with amazing treasures.

Then back on the train to Leipzig, another lovely city which did not suffer as much damage as Dresden in the war. And it was here in St Nicholas Church that we learnt the full story of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

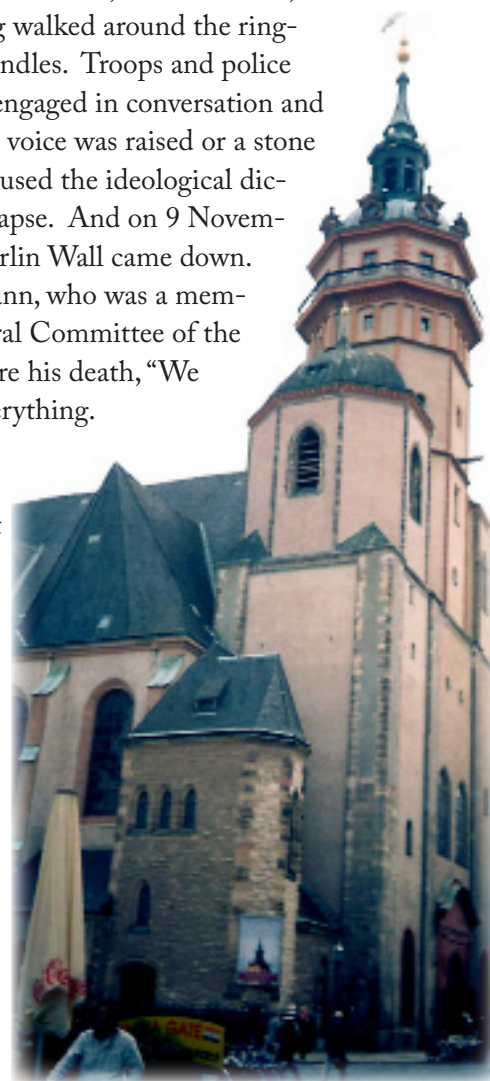
In the 1980s, young Christians in Leipzig began holding peace prayer services every Monday evening in the church. At first only a small number attended but over the years the numbers increased. Christians and non-Christians alike began to attend and were strongly opposed by the East German government. The government attempted to cancel the services and from 8 May 1989 the roads to the church were subjected to large-

scale checks by the police. Monday after Monday there were arrests but even so the number of people flocking to the church continued to grow to the point where the two thousand seats were no longer sufficient. On 7 October, the fortieth anniversary of the DDR, police battered defenceless people for ten hours and took them away in trucks. A few Stasi members had always been on hand at the services but on 9 October the authorities decided to order them to fill the church and by 2pm six hundred of them had already filled the nave, but the service still took place. Many of the Stasi had never heard the gospel and its message of peace and were deeply affected by it. When the service was over the people leaving the church were welcomed by tens of thousands waiting outside.

It was estimated that 350,000 of the 500,000 inhabitants of Leipzig walked around the ring-road carrying candles. Troops and police were drawn in, engaged in conversation and withdrew. Not a voice was raised or a stone thrown but it caused the ideological dictatorship to collapse. And on 9 November 1989 the Berlin Wall came down. Horst Sindermann, who was a member of the Central Committee of the DDR, said before his death, "We had planned everything.

We were prepared for everything. But not for candles and prayers."

We found the story incredibly moving. It just shows that we must always have faith that good will overcome evil by the power of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.



St Nicholas Church Leipzig

News from the Abingdon Churches

St Helen's Church

Tuesdays 7 & 21 September

Desiring Life Reading Group

14.15-16.00, Church Centre Lounge

New book *Living Jesus* by

John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford.

Details from Susan Scott 522960

susan.scott21@btinternet.com

Saturday 11 September

Heritage Weekend and Historic

Churches' Sponsored Ride & Stride

Saturday 11-18 September

Abingdon Artists Exhibition

11.00-17.00, south aisle of Church

Mondays 13 & 27 September

Silent Prayer

18.10, Lady Chapel

Details from Ann Moss

annjmoss@talktalk.net

Tuesday 14 September

Mothers' Union Eucharist

19.30, St Michael's Church

Wednesday 15 September

Wednesday Club

20.00, Church Centre

Bring and Share Harvest Supper

Sunday 19 September

Promenade Concert and Tea

15.00 'cello music, followed at

16.30 by Choral Evensong

Saturday 25 September

Coffee Morning

in aid of Abingdon Hospital League of Friends

10.00-12.00 in Church Centre

Sunday 26 September

Harvest Festival & Back to Church Sunday

11.00 Sung Eucharist, followed by

Bring and Share lunch in south aisle

[Note change of time.]

St Michael's Church

Thursday 16 September

St Michael's Fellowship

14.15 Talk by Cicely Bilverstone

"From Cornwall to Conisborough"

St Nicolas Church

Thursday 16 September

19.30 Song Recital with refreshments

Abingdon Anglo-German Club

Robert Schumann in 1840

Rachel Thorne (Soprano) & John Madden (Piano)

Church in Abingdon

Thursdays 2 & 16 September

"Back to 35"

10.30-11.30 Baptist Church Hall

Opportunity for chat and fellowship

Thursday 2 September:

News from Age UK and Daniel Cliffe

Thursday 16 September: Your Choice of Music

Tuesday 14 September

Christian Mystical Teaching on Meister Eckhart

10.30-16.30 at St Ethelwold's House

£10.00 for the day. Bring and Share lunch.

Booking 01235 555486 or www.ethelwoldhouse.org.uk

Monday 27 September

Abingdon Alpha Supper

19.30 at Dil Raj Restaurant Ock Street

Two-course meal and guest speaker Gary Grant

(owner of the Entertainer chain of toyshops)

Saturday 18 September

35 Ock Street begins selling jams and garden produce

Saturday 25 September

Barn Dance & Ploughman's supper

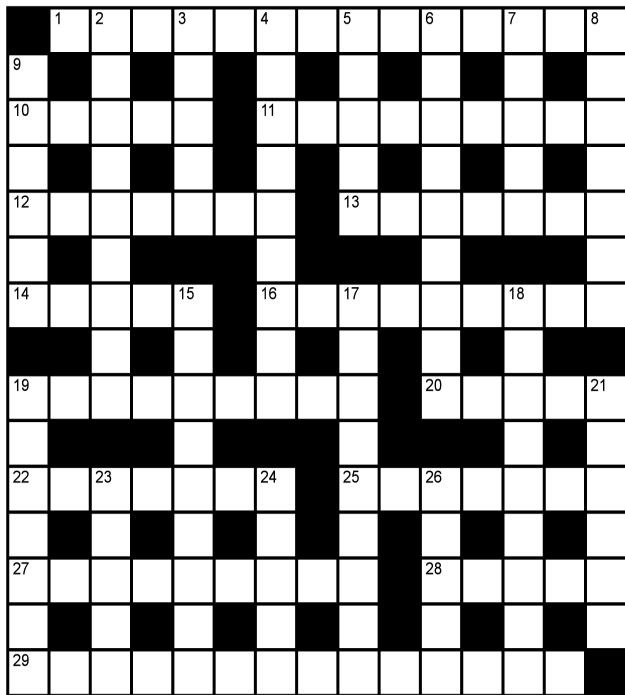
Steventon Village Hall,

organised by Abingdon Baptist Church

If you would like an event listed on this page let us know by the 10th of the previous month and we will try to include it.

Contact Silvia at alanj@phoncoop.coop or tel: 01235 521247

Window Crossword, September 2010



Across

- 1 Assassinated President's ancient father, see (7,7)
- 10 Draws close to northern listeners (5)
- 11 Does away with Sheila's BO completely (9)
- 12 Manage amateur choir one night a week (7)
- 13 Ralph's energy radiated, globe-like (7)
- 14 Standards is collapsing! (5)
- 16 Even Poles managed to open these (9)
- 19 Auto consumable BP might crave (3-6)
- 20 Wreck during Christmas holidays (5)
- 22 Pulls rank with photos at 3-ft range (7)
- 25 Learn properly about Gospels in light of this (7)
- 27 Secure for the night in riverside pub? (9)
- 28 Urchins heard in choir vestry (5)
- 29 Lunatic let yell out in knowledgeable style (14)

Down

- 2 Seaside dance, for whoever might give it a toss (9)
- 3 Where 'I will' rapidly leads to 'I do'? (5)
- 4 Humbling? You'd rarely get lower than this (9)
- 5 Some from pride left particles behind (5)
- 6 A left-hand lesion from such wounds? (4-5)
- 7 Alternative article not the same (5)
- 8 Chocolate brand sitting cosily (7)
- 9 Apart from fashionable end of the pitch (2,4)
- 15 Sweet drum accompaniment to yodelling? (5,4)
- 17 Portable but powerful flare, presumably (4,5)
- 18 Ferry Paul about (his mind on things above!) (9)
- 19 'In-creasing-ly' popular oriental handicraft (7)

Solution to last month's Quiz

- 1. Beggars can't be choosers
- 2. A storm in a teacup
- 3. Two rights don't make a wrong
- 4. Make hay while the sun shines
- 5. All's fair in love and war
- 6. More haste less speed
- 7. Many hands make light work
- 8. Time and tide wait for no man
- 9. Patience is a virtue
- 10. Manners maketh Man
- 11. One good turn deserves another
- 12. The proof of the pudding is in the eating
- 13. Half a loaf is better than no bread
- 14. Easy come, easy go
- 15. A rolling stone gathers no moss
- 16. Set a thief to catch a thief
- 17. One good turn deserves another
- 18. The early bird catches the worm
- 19. Give a dog a bad name
- 20. A stitch in time saves nine
- 21. Absence makes the heart grow fonder
- 22. Many a true word spoken in jest
- 23. Good riddance to bad rubbish
- 24. Every cloud has a silver lining
- 25. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush
- 26. An apple a day keeps the doctor away
- 27. People in glasshouses shouldn't throw stones
- 28. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread
- 29. Honesty is the best policy
- 30. Spare the rod and spoil the child
- 31. Don't put all your eggs in one basket
- 32. Blood is thicker than water
- 33. Revenge is a dish best served cold
- 34. Discretion is the better part of valour
- 35. A change is as good as a rest
- 36. Don't count your chickens before they are hatched
- 37. Look before you leap
- 38. All's well that ends well
- 39. It takes one to know one
- 40. Money is the root of all evil

September at St Helen's Church

The services and events listed are correct when going to press - please consult the weekly Newsheet if in doubt.

Divine Services

Morning Prayer	09.10 every weekday
Evening Prayer	17.10 every weekday
Sung Eucharist	10.00 every Sunday with Junior Church. [26 September, 11.00]
Wednesday Church	10.30 every Wednesday (Holy Communion followed by refreshments)
Baptism	15.00 Sunday 12 and Sunday 26
Silent Prayer	18.10 Monday 13 and Monday 27 September

Sunday Evening Services

5 September	18.30 Eucharist
12 September	18.30 Choral Evensong
19 September	16.30 Choral Evensong
26 September	18.30 Healing Service

Meetings and Gatherings

	all in Church Centre unless marked
Advanced Bell Practice	19.30 Mon 13 September (in Bell Tower)
Baby and Toddler Group	09.30 & 11.00 Monday 13, 20, 27 September
Baptism Couples Reception	19.30 Sunday 5 September
Baptism Preparation	20.00 Tuesday 7 & 21 September
Clergy Consultation	19.00 Tuesday 7 September
DCC meeting	19.30 Monday 6 September
Desiring Life	14.15 Tuesday 7 & 21 September
Marriage Preparation	20.00 Wednesday 22 & 29 September
Mothers' Union	20.00 Tuesday 14 September
Preaching Forum	19.45 Tuesday 20 September
Wednesday Club	20.00 Wednesday 15 September

Events

Abingdon Artists Private View	19.00 Fri 10 September
Abingdon Artists Exhibition	11.00 - 17.00 from Sat 11 to Fri 17
Abingdon Hospital League of Friends	10.00 Coffee Morning Sat 25 September
Historic Churches Bike Ride	09.00 - 16.30 Sat 11 September
Peal of Bells Attempt	15.30 Sat 18 September

St Helen's Church

Harvest Celebrations

and

Back to Church Sunday

All are welcome - bring a friend!

Sunday, 26 September

11.00

Sung Eucharist

followed by

Bring and Share Lunch

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

Rector:	<i>The Revd Dr Charles Miller</i>
Assisting Priest (NSM):	<i>The Revd Tim Hewes</i>
Curate (NSM):	<i>The Revd Dr Simon Thorn</i>
Curate (NSM):	<i>The Revd Dr Jane Baun</i>
Director of Music:	<i>Christopher Fletcher-Campbell</i>
Parish Administrator:	<i>Linda Barker</i>

St. Helen's Church Office: St. Helen's Court, Abingdon, OX14 5BS
01235 520144

(normal opening hours 09.00 to 14.15 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday; 09.15 to 14.15 Friday)

E-mail: administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk

www.sthelens.abingdon.org.uk