



St HELEN'S WINDOW

Come to Supper on Friday?

Bishop Ronald Gordon

Compared with the number of people who used to have a Book of Common Prayer on their shelves, and maybe in their pockets, comparatively few, I suspect, have their own copy of Common Worship. That's not necessarily surprising or blameworthy, since CW is not *a* book but a collection of books. These include, to put it simply, a Sunday book and a week-day book. The web bristles with information about them.

Where I now live we use mainly Common Worship, and are at present onto 'Prayer E'. I often want to ask questions when I hear in this prayer that on the night before Jesus died 'he had supper with his friends'. It has a somewhat suburban ring. 'I wonder if you could both have supper with us next Friday. We've got some delightful people coming whom I'm sure you'd like to meet'. Nothing wrong with that - except that it doesn't quite fit with the Last Supper.

Who were those 'friends' with whom Jesus had his last meal? The chief of them, when trouble arose, denied that he knew anything about Jesus; two of them, sons of an ambitious mother, had inherited her failing, in wanting top seats in the kingdom; one of them had actually betrayed Jesus for money.

I don't know the origin of the phrase in Common Worship about Jesus having 'supper with his friends'. (The company he kept was often what some might call undesirable.) Does it come from an ancient liturgy? Or is it the invention of a modern liturgical committee? Be that as it may, my point is that the supper guests were invited not because they were friends - though they were - but because they were disciples - though at that stage not very good ones. Just as someone might be invited to a meal in Downing Street, not because she or he was a personal friend of the PM but because the invitee was a member of the Cabinet. To be a disciple is to be in a learning role and to be hoping to receive some needed gifts through the agency of another. The New Testament speaks of a 'master'.

So is it wrong to think of us coming to Jesus, perhaps to the sacrament of communion, as a 'friend'? Most certainly not. But the friendship is not something *we* have to offer as a way of qualifying for a seat at the table. The friendship stems always from Jesus himself and, as we encounter him, we may hope to reflect something of it.

'I have called you friends,' he said.

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Letter to the Editor

As Librarian at the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education, John Wesson's 'Learning for Life' article (October issue) certainly resonated with me. I see daily the positive effect study has on people, whether being undertaken for the first time, to change or develop a career, support voluntary work or just for the sheer joy of learning something new. Just this week a reader came into the Library with a broad smile on her face and expressed her excitement at receiving her Freshers' Pack at the age of 65!

Sadly, life-long learning is under threat. The Government no longer gives any funding to anyone studying for an equivalent or lower qualification to one which they already hold. This policy has resulted in a drastic reduction of income for Continuing Education institutions, and has of course resulted in increased fees for all students. Thus life-long learning may be pushed beyond the means of some people.

A further consequence is that many University Departments have decided the challenge is too great and have closed down. In our region, the Departments at Bristol, Bath and Reading Universities have either closed or are winding down, so that courses will simply not be available even if they can be afforded. This comes at a time of recession, and in an era when we are told that the job for life is over and we must be prepared to learn new skills and change track in our working lives.

As the General Election looms, you may wish to question canvassers on their party's policy for life-long/adult learning.

Sue Pemberton

Time to change the date of Advent?

A few weeks ago the Aston Tyrrold Centre for Reflection sent me their August to December programme of Quiet Days and other events. My attention was attracted to an event to be held on Saturday November 28th called "*Preparing for a coming – an Advent Quiet Day*, but on checking my diary I found this was the day of St Helen's Christmas Market so I would be unable to attend. However it did make me think about the purpose of Advent and how impossible it is in today's world to use these four weeks in a quiet prayerful and reflective way. Just look at St Helen's – even our Christmas lunch is booked for December 6th the second Sunday of Advent and the Carol Service for the 20th December. During the run up many of us will be attending various Christmas events most of them involving food and alcohol so that what with all the shopping, planning, travelling etc we arrive at the 25th December exhausted and as one gets older more than somewhat jaded.

Our church will be beautifully and lovingly decorated just before Christmas Eve, and although the season of Christmas extends beyond the 25th December the church will be firmly closed after the morning service on Christmas Day, until the next sparsely attended service and the New Year, when everything will be stripped out, and all that beauty gone largely unseen.

What to do? Well how about Advent Sunday being brought forward to All Saints Sunday and November being used as a time of preparation spiritually and perhaps physically with a degree of abstinence for which our waistlines and liver will be grateful once we arrive at December. After all what's to be said about November - apart from my birthday? To quote the poet Thomas Hood

“No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
 No comfortable feel in any member—
 No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
 No fruits, no flowers, no birds,—
 November!

Let us accept the fact that for the world Christmas reaches a crescendo on the 24th and 25th December when everyone collapses to briefly rise again for the Sales and the New Year celebrations. Why don't we accept this by having a brightly lit, decorated and *open* church during December to encourage people of all ages to come in to soak up the Christmas atmosphere, light candles, say a prayer, and bring in the children. How about having a children's story telling afternoon in the...

...Lady Chapel every Saturday and Sunday afternoon during December of the Christmas story, or stories of how Christmas was spent years ago. Refreshments for parents could be served in the south aisle with folk prepared to engage with them about the place of Christmas and the church in our community life. Let's make the formal time of Advent a cheerful joyous and welcoming time and use November to prepare ourselves for the spiritual aspects of the birth of Christ.

Susan Scott

St Helen's is pleased to welcome...

CAROLINE COX, Baroness Cox of Queensbury

Caroline Cox became the Rt. Honourable Baroness Cox of Queensbury in 1982 and is a cross-bench member of the House of Lords and founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust **HART**.

Caroline's personal faith grew throughout her childhood – a process of evolution, rather than revelation. She was confirmed at the age of 11, which was her choice, without pressure from her parents. At the age of 18 she became a nurse at the London Hospital.

She developed a passion for justice and was a socialist in politics, without ever becoming a member of the Labour Party. Caroline then decided to pursue an academic career and studied sociology as an external student of London University; then evolved a rich background of teaching, lecturing, writing, advocacy and politics. She is probably best known for her persistent advocacy of forgotten conflicts and situations across the globe. On that account she has become known to many as a "voice for the voiceless".

Baroness Cox brings to her wide concerns an engaging passion and inspiring personal witness. The conversation which will take place at **St.Helen's Church on Wednesday November 11th at 7.30pm** will take up topics as diverse as Britain's Christian heritage, its place in the emerging global political order, Christianity and Islam, and the persecuted church.

Do make this evening known to others in the wider community who care about such issues.

My Hobby and Me - My Joy with Borrowed Dogs

Two years have now passed since I first became a host for dogs of owners who go on holiday or in to hospital or go away for some other reason.

The "Barking Mad" franchise phone me if they have a dog in need of a holiday home. This means that I can agree to have the dog or not, to suit myself.

I mostly take small dogs, all of which are trained and in good health. They are all great company and we enjoy lots of walks together. Because these dogs are loved and well cared for they are very affectionate and playful.

There are many hosts for such dogs and the franchise is always seeking new hosts. When they arrive the dogs bring everything with them, bedding, food, toys, treats, dishes, and most important – pooh bags!

After my lovely dog Coffee died I decided not to have another permanent dog and so I really enjoy all kinds of breeds with very different characters who stay for a few days at a time and I give them a holiday away from their home.

Loelia Lyon



Prisons Week - November 15th to 21st November

The annual week of prayer for those involved with, or who care about prisoners

In March 2009 there were 2,133 15-17 year-olds in prison and 255 12-15 year-olds in privately run secure training centres in England and Wales

Although the press focus is often on teenage violent behaviour and teenage drinking habits very little attention is given to children and young people who find themselves in prison –from the babies who are there with offending mothers and the young people who are there because of their own offences. As this is still the YEAR OF THE CHILD it seems appropriate to remind ourselves of some of the facts.

- # At the end of March 2009 more children were in prison for robbery than any other offence.
- # Twenty-nine children have died in penal custody since 1990 most by self-inflicted death but one following restraint.
- # Two out of five girls and one out of four boys in custody report suffering violence at home.
- # 40% of children in custody have previously been homeless.
- # It is estimated that there are 160,000 children with a parent in prison each year.

During their time at school 7% of children experience their father's imprisonment. In 2006, more children were affected by the imprisonment of a parent than by divorce in the family.

Figures from the Annual Prison Factfile (June 2009) produced by the charity the Prison Reform Trust. www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk

PRISONS WEEK was formed to pray for and raise awareness of the needs of prisoners and their families, victims of offenders, prison staff and all who care. It is a registered charity www.prisonweek.org

A PRAYER

Lord, you offer freedom to all people.

We pray for those in prison. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist.

Support with your love prisoners, their families and friends, prison staff and all who care.

Heal those who have been wounded by the activities of others, especially the victims of crime.

Help us to forgive one another, to act justly, love mercy and walk humble together with Christ in

His strength and in His Spirit, now and every day.

Amen

Women Prisoners in Rwanda

During her summer vacation from Bristol University Lindsay Dale visited Rwanda and went inside the women's prison there with Prison Fellowship Rwanda, she writes...

Imagine thousands of people, dressed in pink and orange pyjamas, crammed inside a prison stretched far beyond its capacity. Many of these men and women will never receive news from their loved ones during their imprisonment; in fact many claim to be falsely imprisoned and doubt that they will ever be granted freedom or a fair trial. It is perhaps strange then, that I received the warmest, most heartfelt welcome of my trip to Rwanda from the female inmates of Rilima penitentiary.

We had barely stepped inside their courtyard before being engulfed by a wave of hugs, kisses and best wishes, showing not only how fondly they regarded Pastor 'Papa' Deo, but also their enthusiasm to hear him speak again. Prison Fellowship Rwanda's ministry, primarily working with current and former prisoners and genocide survivors, focuses on the need for repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. The fact that these words are used so much by Rwandan authorities and aid agencies (to the point where they seem governmentally-forced requirements), means that prisoners are initially unable to accept or trust that true forgiveness and freedom could be a reality. However, the gospel focus of all PFR's work shows that the route to real reconciliation (with God, themselves, and those they've offended) can be found in Christ.

It is seeing the impact that salvation in Jesus has on the lives of these people, who've lived through, and even been responsible for, unspeakable suffering, that motivates Prison Fellowship Rwanda to keep preaching the transformational power of the good news for all people.

New Faces in St Helen's

Bishop Henry and Mrs Catherine Scriven - from America to Abingdon

My husband Henry and I are discovering what it is like to live on an ancient little street in a medieval town. It was only a year ago that we came to England for a week for Henry to meet with his new colleagues and give me three days in which to find a house. We had been in Pittsburgh six years, Henry working as a bishop and I as a teacher. We were delighted to move back to England and be nearer to our children and new grandchild. Henry went off to his meetings that day in October, and I saw thirty houses, ten in Oxford, ten in the surrounding villages and ten in Abingdon. It was a gift from God to meet Bishop Ronald Gordon, see his lovely house on East St. Helen Street and have our offer accepted.

My background is full of years of living in different countries. I was born in Madrid of American diplomatic parents and grew up in Argentina, Brazil, Panama and Peru with a smattering of Washington DC in between tours. Henry was born in Farnham in Surrey; both his parents were military doctors and he had a very English upbringing between his lovely country house and Repton School. We met in 1973 when I was travelling in England. We attended theological college together and married in 1975.

Henry was a curate in Harrow for four years and then we went to Argentina with SAMS in 1980. We were only there for two years, as we left with other missionaries in 1982, at the outbreak of the Falklands war. We fled back to my country and Henry got a job in an Episcopal church as an assistant rector in Little Rock, Arkansas, my mother's home state. In 1985 we went to Spain to live and work with the Spanish Episcopal church. In 1990 Henry was appointed chaplain to the British Embassy Church of St. George, Madrid. Then in 1995 Henry was appointed Suffragan Bishop in Europe. He was consecrated in St. Paul's Cathedral by Archbishop George Carey who had also married us twenty years before.

After seven years of travelling around the forty countries and two hundred chaplaincies, we had the privilege of being called back to the States where Henry was Assistant Bishop of Pittsburgh for almost seven years. Henry is South American Mission Director for SAMS/CMS, and also Assistant Bishop in Oxford. Apart from being a Grandma one day a week, I am available to meet our new friends and neighbours in East St. Helen Street.

Catherine Scriven

Simon Thorn PhD, FCollP, CBiol, FLS.

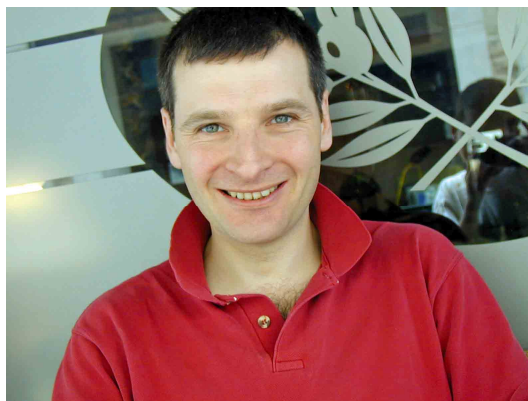
Simon is the quintessential Englishman. Educated at one old Church of England Public School - Winchester - he now teaches Science at another one - Radley - and has done so for over ten years. At an earlier age than most of us, his grandmother taught him to pray and nurtured in him her love of the Psalms and the Proverbs. Winchester College caught the ball she threw, and ran with it as far as it could towards last week's try-line: Simon's ordination as a deacon in the Church of England.

His school awakened in the teenage Simon an initial sensitivity and later a certainty in the existence of God, discerned in the regular attendances at obligatory Chapel services and the voluntary Eucharists. By the end of his first year at this school founded by a priest (William of Wykeham, the 14th century Bishop of Winchester, no less!) in order to train boys up to become priests, Simon had turned into a confirmed Christian.

As a biologist, however, he was later advised to train as a doctor, despite the ever-present call of his Maker "needling" him to come into the fold. His long career and training in the biological sciences have however helped his faith: like all good doctors, he is not afraid of needles - whether they come from God or mankind. His training as a scientist enables him to reassure us that he is "certain that life has evolved by natural selection. Our Christian faith helps us understand why we are here and what our responsibilities are to God, to one another and to the planet on which we live."

Despite his eminence in his educational and scientific fields, Simon is well endowed with a very English sense of modesty. St Helen's is very fortunate to welcome him as our new Curate, and does so with open arms.

David Pope October 2009



St Helen's Church and Church in Abingdon news

St Helen's Church

Sunday 1 November *All Saints' Day*

Deanery Choral Evensong

Tea in South Aisle from 15:00

Choral Evensong with joint choirs 16:30

Preacher: The Rt Revd Henry Scriven

Sunday 8 November *Remembrance Sunday*

10:00 Civic Service with Uniformed Organisations

11:00 Ceremony at the War Memorial

Wednesday 11 November

A Heart for Humanity

Baroness Cox in conversation with the Rector

19:30 in Church, followed by refreshments

and a chance to meet the speaker

Adults £5, students £3

Sunday 15 November

Promenade Concert

15:00 Tea and music for 8 cellos

16:30 Sung (not Choral) Evensong

Wednesday 18 November

Wednesday Club

20:00 in Church Centre

Talk on Northmoor Trust (note change of topic)

Friday 20 November

Friends of St Helen's

in Church Centre

19:30 refreshments

10:00 talk by Pat Goodwin

Members £2, non-members £3

Saturday 21 November

Concert by Abbey Brass

19:30 in Church

Tuesday 24 November

Shopping trip to Salisbury

Cost £15 per person. More details and list

to sign on board in church, or contact

Susan Scott (01235 522960)

Wednesday 25 November

11:00 Welcome Home Service for the Army

Saturday 28 November

10:00-15:00 **Christmas Market**

in Church, with coffee in the South Aisle,
and light lunches in Church Centre 12:00-14:00

Volunteers for help on the day and
organising stalls, please contact Susan
(01235 522960) / see notice in church

Sunday 29 November *Advent Sunday*

16:30 Service of Readings and Hymns

St Michael's Church

Saturday 21 November

Christmas Fair 10:00-15:00

A variety of stalls, refreshments and

a chance to see the new Labyrinth

Wednesday 25 November

Lunch Club 12:30

2 course meal for £3.75

To book call 01235 522591 or 01235 538758

Church in Abingdon and beyond

Sunday 22 November

Annual Bereavement Service

15:00 at St Helen's Church

Food Bank

100 people have been helped so far by this scheme
which has received many harvest contributions so at
present the cupboard is full. Please continue to pray
for the project and look out for future appeals.

"Back to 35"

Meetings organised by Age Concern and 35 Ock
Street to provide conversation, activities and useful
information. 10:30-11:30 in Baptist Church Hall

5 November: Seated Exercise class

19 November: Amnesty International

Riding Lights Theatre Company

"Origins and Lemons"

Squeeze the juice out of *Genesis*

19:30, Monday 9 November

at All Saints', Marcham

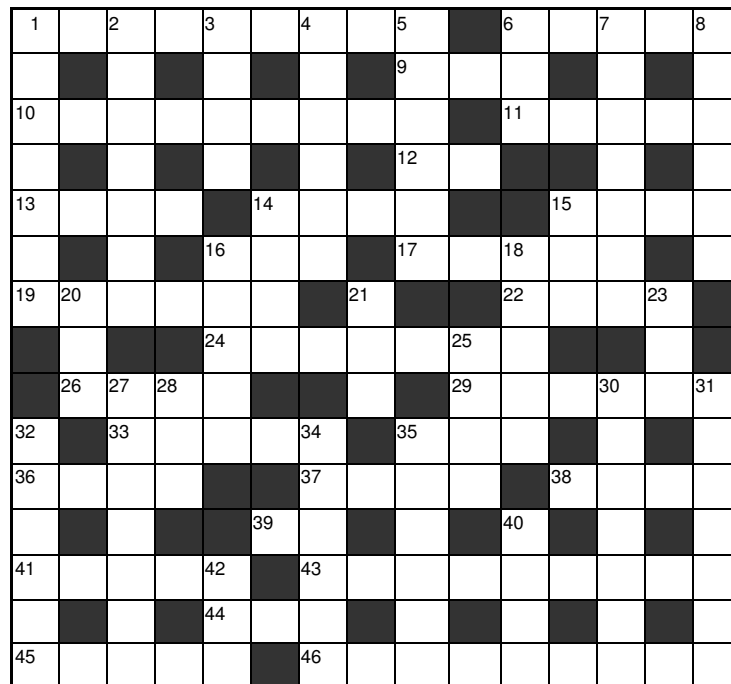
Tickets £13, concessions £8

01904 613000 or www.ridinglights.org

Solution to October Crossword



Several Dickens Tales by Eccles



ACROSS

- 1 * Busy rails (9)
 6 * Is it far to go to find water ? (5)
 9 * Lovely ending (3)
 10 A French national river is artificial (9)
 11 Three points you and I heard creates boredom (5)
 12 "___ he comes with clouds descending" (2)
 13 Starts to take risks over your weight (4)
 14 Minty game (4)
 15 Went away - that's not right (4)
 16 Take a turn holding feed (3)
 17 Crisp iron in conflict (5)
 19 Nearly the importance of being Hemingway (6)
 22 "...who from their labours ____" (4)
 24 Prickly emblem (7)
 26 I will shortly be heard to go to the dogs (4)
 29 Amorous Eric holds books (6)
 33 Name vehicle the French way (5)
 35 Name for western lifejacket (3)
 36 Investigation before Yankee and Zulu appear (4)
 37 Number return negative at midday (4)
 38 "____, only ____, and ____ for all" (4)
 39 Goodness me, Mary lost heart (2)
 41 Agree with everybody in extremes of tragedy (5)
 43 Nut is not heavy part of car (9)
 44 For example nothing beats vanity (3)
 45 * Tear open leg (5)
 46 * Saucy china (9)

DOWN

- 1 The lust of making a target for racket (7)
 2 * Abraham's car (7)
 3 Sounds like sense building caravan for instance (4)
 4 Remove the weeds from our pot (6)
 5 The cowardly cry in pain (6)
 6 Question Ross on this (3)
 7 Dance for the cavalrymen (7)
 8 "For all the ____" (6)
 14 Keep a thing for part of the way (4)
 15 Enfield on Solent (3)
 16 There's hydrogen missing from this mixed compound (5)
 18 Jacques' brother (5)
 20 Henri or Louis (3)
 21 Enquire at Abingdon restaurant (3)
 23 Prefix three in strife (3)
 25 Tend towards Jack's preference (4)
 27 All cops manufacture shallow dish (7)
 28 Set chant (3)
 30 Thing to change time (7)
 31 * Ottoman queen (7)
 32 * Old partner and French queen (6)
 34 Some question carelessly (6)
 35 Missouri fur cloth (6)
 40 Down with the royal navy perhaps (4)
 42 Longing for money (3)

The asterisked clues relate to the title in some way and do not have a definition. Chambers dictionary is recommended.

November at St Helen's Church

Divine Services

Morning Prayer	09:10	every weekday
Evening Prayer	17:10	every weekday
Sung Eucharist	10:00	every Sunday except 8 November
Silent Prayer	18:10	Mondays 2, 16 & 30 November
Sunday 8 November	10:00	Remembrance Service and procession to War Memorial
Sunday 8 November	15:00	Baptism
Sunday 22 Nov.	15:00	CiA Bereavement Service
Wednesday 25 Nov.	11:00	Homecoming Parade Service

Meetings and Gatherings

Alpha Course	19:30	every Thursday in Church Centre
Babies & Toddlers	09:30	and 11:00 every Monday in Church Centre
Baptism prep.	20:00	Tuesdays 3 & 10 November
Beavers and Cubs	17:15	Wednesdays 11, 18 & 25 November
Brownies	18:15	Tuesdays 3, 10, 17 & 24 November
Darby and Joan	13:00	Tuesday 24 November
Desiring Life	14:30	Tuesdays 10 & 17 November
Friends of St Helen's	19:30	Friday 20 November
Marriage prep.	20:00	Wednesday 25 November
Museum Friends' meeting	19:00	Thursday 5 November in Church
Wednesday Club	20:00	Wednesday 18 November

Events

Baroness Cox	19:30	Wednesday 11 November in Church
Peal of bells	10:00	Saturday 21 November
Abbey Brass Concert	19:30	Saturday 21 November
Salisbury Shopping	<i>t.t.b.c.</i>	Tuesday 24 November
Christmas Market	10:00-15:00	Saturday 28 November

Sunday Evening Services

1 Nov.	16:30	Deanery Choirs' Choral Evensong
8	18:30	Sung Eucharist
15	16:30	Sung Evensong
22	18:30	Celtic Service
29	16:30	Advent Carols and Readings



'3rd Sunday' Music at St Helen's

15 November
Cello Collection
Music for up to 8 cellos
Music and Tea at 15:00,
followed by simple sung
Evensong at 16:30

29 November
Advent Carols and Readings
16:30

20 December
Christmas Carols and Readings

17 January 2010
Come and sing *Messiah*

To arrange baptisms, weddings and funerals please contact the Parish Office.
Clergy are available in the Church Office between 19:00 - 20:00 on Wednesdays;
please call the office to book an appointment.

Rector:	The Revd Dr Charles Miller
Assisting Priest (NSM):	The Revd Tim Hewes
Curate (NSM):	The Revd Dr Simon Thorn

Director of Music:	Christopher Fletcher-Campbell
Parish Administrator:	Linda Barker

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

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