

Grapevine

June / July 2007

Parish Magazine

St. Luke with St. Bartholomew



Fun Community – Fun Concert



Nigel Hardcastle

We are really lucky in East Reading. We live in a vibrant, fun community. This was reflected in the Community Concert at St Luke's on Friday 18th May. About 150 people were present.

Alfred Sutton School took part for the first time and provided a choir of about 18 youngsters. They sang two lovely songs with great skill. This is in SATs week!

The St Luke and St Bartholomew Hand bell ringers played two songs. Their tone was delightful. Then the Hindu Temple Bollywood Dancers danced two numbers, Billo and Rangilla. As usual they danced with great panache and lovely costumes.

After the interval the Aldbrickham Clog and Step dancers, danced about 8 dances. Most were traditional English dances from different parts of the country. One was from France. Their costumes are colourful and the band of 4 performed well.

Three soloists took part. Kate Burt sang 'Vissi D'arte' from Tosca by Puccini. Annie Czajkowski sang 'I could have danced all night' from My Fair Lady. Gillian Whiteman sang 'In Uomini, in Soldati' from Cosi Fan Tutte by Mozart.

The finale was our own Outreach Band. Lots of people, including the Bollywood dancers stood up and joined in the clapping to a rock number and the final gospel song.

The collection raised over £130 for Communicare and over £70 for the Hindu Temple.

We are lucky to live in this lively community where very different people can have fun together in this way.

Memoirs from Two Sunday Schools

 Sylvia Rayner

Mid-Thirties

My mother ran a Sunday School Class in our home. 33 children aged 3-11 years.

Singing wonderful choruses, listening to the Bible stories, interesting visitors and "expression work" in our dining room. Laughter and mischief abounded.

Outings and picnics, Christmas parties and prize-givings annually.

Peter, my friend, the prime instigator, would arrive armed catapult in pocket, inspirationally, lustily singing "Sit down, sit down for Jesus" sitting down! Giggles ensued. My mother skilfully kept order. One remembered the Message.

Years later, she told me that she especially loved the naughty ones.

My saddened thoughts are of Paul (twin brother to Tony) who put all his joy and effort into learning choruses, He would lean forward eagerly singing "Jesus wants me for a sunbeam". Aged four, he developed bronchopneumonia and lay in bed trying to sing this chorus. (No antibiotics then).

We visited his grave; on his stone was written "God's little sunbeam".

Late fifties

St Luke's Sunday School in the Parish Hall at 3pm....about 45 children, aged 5-11 years.

A general introduction followed by smaller groups, divided by age and sex, each with a teacher, who had prepared a lesson from the curriculum – followed by a discussion.

I taught girls, 8-9 years. I memorised the lesson in order to have more interaction with them. I learnt as much as they did, from their thoughts.

Discipline was strict. Naughty kids were supposed to stand in the corner.

One gorgeous girl once looked me straight in the eye saying "You think it's funny too!". Oh dear! We really enjoyed ourselves.

"Outside hours" I used to visit parents and have my class around to tea en route. We created our own Easter Garden and at Christmas, the Dunsters with others, constructed and lit up a stable. The girls made the figures.

A happy time, sadly I had to give up due to working Sundays.

Six months later. A visit from there young ladies. "Can you help us with our Scripture homework?"

Three weeks later. A visit from four young ladies. "Can you help us with our Maths homework?"

A little rusty there!!!!



Mothers' Union News and Notices



Joan Morgan and Pat Townsend

The MU sale in April raised the splendid total of £300 for the 'Away From It All' fund, to help carers and poor families have a holiday, which they themselves could not afford. A big thank you to everyone who supported it.

For our April meeting, we had a nice Easter tea and a very interesting photo competition of members' photos from their early days.

On 24 April, we joined the Salvation Army Home League Centenary Celebration at the Citadel with songs and readings. The 'Balloon Talk' and a delicious tea made it a joyful time with a feeling of the presence of Jesus there among us all.

At the May meeting prayers were led by Mrs Pat Townsend, including prayers for Mrs G. Brown and for Mrs Rachel Fox. Father Brian gave us a Bible Quiz which was most entertaining and made some of us realise that we needed to read more of our Bibles.

On 7 June we are invited to tea at St Peter's Earley and on 15 June the MU Wave of Prayer will take place at St Luke's from 3:20pm to 4pm.

Risen, Ascended, Glorified on Thursday 17 May, the service for Ascension Day was beautiful and on Friday 18 a different but equally beautiful occasion filled the church for the East Reading Community Concert.

News from East Africa – second instalment

 Thomas Green

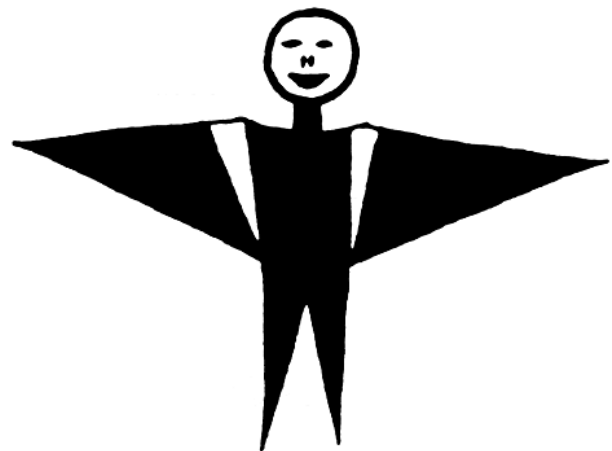
The Project LINX team have finally made it over the border from Kenya and I find myself at a "high-speed" internet cafe in Dar Es Salaam on the eastern coast of Tanzania.

Last time I wrote, we were just about to leave Nairobi to visit two schools near the Amboseli National Park in Kenya. Since then we have visited these needy schools and formed some fantastic relationships.

The first school, Lenkitem Primary, was located about 20 miles north through the bush from the western entrance to Amboseli and just reaching our destination proved to be quite an experience.

At the National Park gate, the road finished and the only navigational tool of any use was our GPS unit (we had a waypoint for the school). After avoiding

elephants and giraffe for about one hour, we were within sight of the school when up popped a dry river bed with embankments too steep to cross.



It was getting dark and we were in lion territory (need less to say, we never saw any - typical!) but then a stroke of luck: a Masai woman willing to show us the way.

After driving well out of our way avoiding Manyattas (the Masai communities) and desperately trying not to mow down stray goats and herds of cattle, we eventually reached a point

high enough up stream where the banks were shallow enough to enable crossing.

Two hours later we'd arrived and started to set up camp.

This community must have thought aliens had landed - our encampment on the edge of the school football pitch included a huge Land Rover with the roof tent open, a trailer with the sleeping compartment and kitchen area set up and a 6-man tent we were testing prior to the visit of our sponsors that looked like a giant hippo.

Oh, and just to top it all off, we had a bright orange electric fence around it all to stop goats and other random livestock getting in.

This must have done about as much for Anglo-Masai relations as Berlusconi's repertoire of impressions did to enhance the Italian-German friendship.

Whatever.

Over the week we did manage to construct some meaningful bridges: tea (a local brew with goats milk) every day with the headmaster; music lessons with pupils of all ages from 6-26 (note to self, if you want to cause a ruck in Africa, let a school of 260 loose on a 1980s Casio keyboard...); sport in the afternoons; arts and craft with the lower primary; a concert to finish the week with traditional Masai dancing and a short recital from the English end.

In fact, I'm convinced that we did something right: we were each given more Masai bracelets, kikois (pronounced "kick-koys" - a type of wrap/skirt/David Beckham effort) and other trinkets by the children than you can possibly imagine.

Oh, and I was proposed to by a 13-year-old Masai girl named Rita - I was tempted (massive loopy earlobes/big stick to show importance that gets lengthened the older you get...) but the

thought of having to live in a Manyatta really turned me off: the Masai won't kill flies (they view them as sacred) and their huts are founded and part-constructed on large mounds of goats poo...you get the picture.

The following week proved to be another adventure and quite an awe-inspiring one.

We collected four of our sponsors from the airstrip in Amboseli National Park on a bright Tuesday morning with a cloud-free Kilimanjaro as the back-drop.

Absolutely stunning.

On their arrival, we took them to our relocated encampment at Ol Moti Primary School, south of the park, and discovered the dreadful state of the school in daylight.

Opened in 1980 with four classrooms, the Born Free Foundation had invested in the school in recent years partly due to Masai human-elephant conflicts as these beautiful creatures have a

habit of roaming in the area in the mornings and evenings when the children are trying to get to school.



However, we discovered early on that the headteacher (1 of a 3-man teaching team) often turned up school for 3 days a week (and sometimes not at all...) and that the classrooms and facilities were in a terrible state with enrolment down from 180 to 50 pupils in recent times.

Our millionaire sponsors were quite shocked and toyed with the idea of walking away from the school altogether.

Instead, we really worked

tirelessly over the week: we painted a classroom (as an example for the remaining ones) and with the help of a headmaster-friend of our sponsors, we explained to the teachers how to keep them attractive and make them interactive so the children had their work displayed.

We marked out a football pitch and volleyball & netball courts whilst locally purchasing the materials for goals and nets.

Part of our team went in search of the District Commissioner (quite an elusive man) and after finding him quickly got him on side: at the start of the following week he had arrived at the school and went round the local area

enrolling children - have you ever seen 40 children appear from the back of a Land Rover?!!

By the end of the week, the sponsors had put in place a development plan which was approved by the school, Born Free, the local communities and importantly (to actually ensure it happens) the DC.

They would continue to help improve the school if the headmaster met certain targets.

After writing these tales, my fingers are exhausted so I shall leave it there - we're heading to Mafia Island and Zanzibar over the next few weeks so I'll send an update with news of that.

Thomas