
The Marksman



December 2008

**The Marksman is the magazine of
St. Mark's Church, Versailles, and
St. Paul's Church, Chevry.**

Welcome

If you think it's a long time since you last saw the Marksman – you're right! And it's mainly because your humble servant failed to get his act together at the rentrée.

In this issue we again look back, with reminiscences of previous chaplains, and also forward with plans for our major building project: to build a 250-seat auditorium for which we have already, in an incredibly short time raised over 200 000 €, or more than 20% of the total estimated cost of the project. Praise the Lord!

We have also in this issue tried to be outward-looking, in particular to areas of the world like Burma and North Africa where being a Christian is both difficult and dangerous, and from where members of Saint Mark's have just recently sent us their first-hand experiences.

The fact that this belated copy of the Marksman is finally in your hands is thanks to a lot of hard work by Karen Cheeseman who, although now living in Rennes and no longer a member of St Marks, has done all the page setting and photo layout. If you can do this, or know someone at Saint Mark's who can, don't be backward in coming forward to help your technologically challenged editor!

John Penhallow

Contents

2	A word from Paul	9	A world Away - Burma
3	Reach!	13	Pastors Past
4	News from the Alliance	16	Christmas is coming!
5	Can you spare a night's B&B?	17	Sounds familiar
6	A Bishop in a Sandy See!	19	Christmas Fun
7	Reaching out...	21	Through the eyes of a child.

Just for starters!



Husband: "I don't know how women can be so stupid and so beautiful at the same time."

Wife: "Allow me to explain. God made us beautiful so you would be attracted to us; God made us stupid so we would be attracted to you".

A Word from Paul...



Nothing is beyond God's REACH !!

At Christmas we are reminded of the immense reach of God. The world was completely unable to climb up and find the Holy God, so He reached down and bridged the gap. God so loved the world that he reached out and gave his one and only Son to live and die for us. When God announced his unlikely plan of salvation to Mary, the angel declared to her "Nothing is impossible with God" – nothing is beyond His REACH !!

We have just launched REACH, our Building Project to complete Phase 3 of St.Mark's Church. You can read about it here in this edition of The Marksman, or you can take one of the REACH leaflets from church or visit www.stmarksversailles.org to get the full information. There's even a video! Do watch it on the website. Thanks to the great generosity of church members there is already nearly 220,000€ in the Building Fund. That is an amazing first step on the way to raising more than a million to achieve our target. But... nothing is beyond His REACH !!

If you have friends who you think would like to be involved, please put them in touch.

The spiritual focus for the project is to REACH out to other churches and to become a "storehouse church", equipped to bless and help others. By God's grace good things are happening here at St.Marks. Prayers are answered, some people have received healing and strengthening, the Holy Spirit is keenly at work; God's presence in worship is regularly experienced and enjoyed; our children are growing, our young people are being guided – the Kingdom of God is advancing significantly. If any of that can be shared with others, then the blessing will be doubled. Recently we held a Download Day for equipping and encouraging; around 30 people from a variety of churches attended and were blessed. A Download Day is a day for off-loading our stresses and difficulties and downloading whatever God wants to do in our lives. To continue the imagery, it is a chance to over-write our internal hard-drive with God's programme and to install on our hearts His wisdom and Word. The next Download Day will be Jan 20th, when the speaker will be Tim's new boss from Rugby, Martin Saxby. I hope you can come.

May I take this opportunity to wish all our readers a very Happy and Blessed Christmas. God, in Christ, has reached down once again into our darkness. God is with us – and that is Good News for us to share. Our storehouse is full of good things – kingdom blessings. Sharing those good things is a ministry that will engage us not just for Christmas but for the whole year to come. May God bless you all.

Paul Kenchington

REACH! Building to serve our Community

As we have been sharing in recent sermons, St Mark's faces an exciting challenge as we raise money and prepare to build a 250-seat auditorium. This will enable continued church growth, and the building will be one of the largest Christian centres with dedicated car parking in the Ile-de-France. We need to raise 600,000 Euros to build this building. Including furnishings, the final estimated total is 1 million Euro. By early December 2008, members of St Mark's have already given over 200,000 Euros.

Getting the message out to a wide audience is absolutely essential. As well as current church members, we want to send information to:

- Churches in France and other countries
- Charities and cultural associations in France and abroad
- Companies in France and abroad
- Our local community, French-speaking and English-speaking
- Other users of our building

Would you help in gathering contact details for those we can write to now that the REACH Brochure is ready to send out?

Ways you might gather these contacts might include:

- People / organizations you already know
- Asking others for suggestions
- Internet research
- Printed materials (the church office has some books which may be relevant).

Please do let us have these contact details as soon as possible, by replying to reach@stmarksversailles.org

Paul Kenchington

Goings out and comings in

Tim Norman our associate pastor has accepted the post of Associate Vicar of the church of St Matthew and St Oswald in Rugby (UK). This he tells us is a lively New Wine church, and Tim will be taking up his post there in the spring. In the meantime he has been heading up the REACH building development appeal. We need to pray for Tim, Vanessa and Sammy particularly over the coming months as they make preparations for their move, and for the arrival of a baby in January!

In September 2008 we welcomed a new and valued member to the pastoral team in the person of Nathan Lambert as Youth Staff Worker. Commenting on this newly created post, Paul Kenchington said "As a church, we are committed to the spiritual growth of our youth. In partnership with our volunteer youthwork teams Nathan's job is to lead and develop this vital ministry".

News from the Alliance

Saint Mark's is a member of the Evangelical Alliance, founded in 1846 and the oldest alliance of evangelical Christians in the world. The Alliance has a membership including denominations, churches, organisations and individuals. In its formative years the Alliance particularly stood for the victims of religious persecution and enabled evangelicals from different denominations to work together. As part of a movement 'uniting to change society' the Alliance promotes unity and truth, acts as an evangelical voice to the state, society and the wider church, and works collaboratively with Alliance members and other evangelicals, to present Christ credibly as good news for spiritual and social transformation. The Alliance speaks on behalf of its members and represents evangelical concerns to Government, the National Assemblies, the media and key decision-makers. In resourcing its members and encouraging Christians to fully engage in their communities as responsible citizens, the Alliance strives to make evangelical truths publicly accessible.

Dear Paul

In September 2008 I stepped down as the Alliance's General Director. It was a great wrench to leave this wonderful organisation, but I am convinced that after 20 years with the Alliance and ACEA God is leading me to new challenges.

Last year, I completed my second five-year term as leader of the Alliance, but wanted to stay on in the role to finish the work I was doing on our mission and vision for the future. This work is now outlined in my book *An Agenda for Change*, and I feel God is saying that it is the right time for me to hand over the baton to a new head of the Alliance, who will spearhead the delivery of this vision over the coming years.

I continue to be excited by this vision. Everything we do aims to unite evangelicals to present Christ credibly to government and society; be good news to the poor and marginalised; and mobilise the church for spiritual and social transformation. But this is not just my vision. It is the vision of the Alliance's Board, its Council and for its membership. And the Alliance will continue to work towards its fulfilment.

I am also excited that God has provided the Alliance with an incredible and gifted staff team, people with not only the necessary skills, but also the passion and dedication, to see His kingdom built. There are many new initiatives and projects that I really do believe will enable evangelicals to truly make a difference up and down our country.

Please do pray for the Alliance's Board, Council, Directors and staff at this time of change. Please also pray for my successor; I have no doubt that God will bring His man or woman to lead the Alliance into the exciting next phase!

Finally, please do inform your congregation and members – they are an important part of the Alliance and I am keen to assure them that this is God's leading and is part of His kingdom plan.

With every blessing



Joel Edwards

Can you spare a night's bed and breakfast?



Saint Mark's is also a member of ICS, an international Church of England mission agency which seeks to make known the Christ of the Scriptures to people of any nationality who speak English. The following appeal was received recently from ICS:

Christmas has always recently involved one of my sons in the school or church nativity play. A shy young girl, dressed as Mary, is accompanied by a young boy (more at home on the football pitch) sporting a fine tea towel as a head dress, enact the futile search for a night in a hotel room in which the Saviour of the world could be born. The stable plays host instead. A night's bed and breakfast in the UK would be at least £40 (€48, CHF70) but all the money in the world could not secure a comfortable room for Jesus' family.

Now cast your mind forward to after Jesus' birth. Following the visit of the wise men, Herod tries to kill all children of Jesus' age to eliminate a potential rival. The family flee to Egypt: would they have looked in the same way on their first night in Egypt for a night's lodging? In exile, far from home, probably knowing no one, what they needed was a welcoming face, a bed for the night, and some help settling in. Not too different, then, from being an English-speaker living abroad for the first time?

Conscious of the growing numbers moving to live and work in Cairo, ICS is part-funding a new chaplain for Cairo Cathedral (Mike Parker) to work specifically amongst the English-speaking community, reaching out to those who find themselves (like Jesus' family) in Egypt (pick up December's ICS News from church for more news). Do pray, as he and wife Helen bring this new ministry to those far from home, that they will be the fragrance of Christ to those settling in a new land. ICS is contributing £5,000 (€6,000/CHF9,000) toward Mike's stipend over three years. And if this Christmas you could spare the price of a night's bed and breakfast and enable this important pastoral ministry to strangers, you may give on line via our web site or send us a cheque. Your gift will help touch the lives of many with the Saviour's love.

May you know God's leading and comfort in 2009.

David Healey,

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Rt Rev. Bill Musk - Bishop in a Sandy See



*Bill Musk, new area
Bishop of North Africa
pictured with his wife
Hillary*

Have you been to Tunisia on holiday? Just a short hop across the Mediterranean are beautiful beaches, orange trees growing in gardens, warm hospitality and a very different experience as European culture, history and architecture interface with the North African and Arab influences. French is spoken widely, and trade agreements with the EU enable the fruits of Tunisia's fertile agricultural land to be widely exported. Tunis is home to the African Development Bank. The antiquities are fascinating, especially the Christian ones: Tertullian and Augustine, key figures in church history, once walked its streets. Tunisia had a thriving indigenous Christian community and the Roman Catholic cathedral bears inscriptions recording the stand of the church against early heresies. Today, Tunisia has a small number of officially recognised Christian places of worship, one of which is the lively Diocese of

Egypt church of St. George's, Tunis. Its packed services indicate that it is a real spiritual home to Christians from the Americas, all over Africa, Europe and beyond, worshipping in their common language: English.

Tunis is also now the home base of the first Anglican Area Bishop for North Africa, Bill Musk. An expert on Islam, Bill's appointment is being part-funded by ICS because his strategic brief from his Diocesan bishop to strengthen English-language ministry, as well as the work of the Anglican church generally in Libya, Tunisia and Algeria. And there is plenty of opportunity for the churches' outreach into the international community: 50,000 English-speakers now live in Tripoli and Libya is a growing tourist destination; and Algeria (where ICS will help with the appointment of a new chaplain in 2009) has growing European business links and immense gas reserves.

Please pray for :

- Bill Musk's new role as chaplain and Area Bishop as he adjusts to the new cultural context and the finding of a new chaplain for Tripoli, as the previous chaplain died suddenly in November.
- The new chaplain in Cairo (part-funded by ICS) Mike Parker beginning work this month. For more news see December 2008's ICS News and prayer diary available in your church.
- Preparations for 14 March one-day forum on outreach and Christian growth in Antwerp, being run by ICS as a resource for the Archdeaconry of North West Europe.

Reaching out ...



Most of us at Saint Mark's know the writer of this article; he and his family are personal friends to many of us. We live in a country where Christians enjoy freedom and safety. They do not. For their safety and the continuation of their missionary work we publish this article anonymously.

This is the time for the Arab countries. From each of these precious lands, prayer is going up in worship to Jesus. Even while news coverage reflects conflict and grief, Jesus is on the spot, in the places where Arab and Muslim people are tormented by violence, and injustice in many forms. How can I affirm this?

Firstly: thousands of new brothers and sisters trust in Jesus, their access to the Gospel is through satellite channels that preach in Arabic. Biblical and respectful of their fellow-citizens, evangelists from these countries show love and understanding of the world-view that has hidden Jesus full glory from them. Rachid, a Moroccan evangelist, uses his knowledge of the Qur'an and the Bible to explain respectfully about the uniqueness of Jesus. He receives many phone calls, most of them from people who want to follow Christ. He is firm and loving in dealing with the angry ones. People are being impressed.

Secondly: these new believers suffer. Let me say first that in the present climate Muslims suffer too. Mrs Bhutto is the example of one, who loved justice and freedom and paid with her life for what she believed. Yet Christians also suffer. Because they carry the Name of Christ, they face anger, threats imprisonment and long term emotional stress. But their suffering is melting the attitudes of those around them. For some examples you could read the recent book about Mazhar Mallouhi: 'A muslim Pilgrim on the Christian road', by Paul-Gordon Chandler.

The greatest stress comes from their loved ones. A young man in our country, called Christopher, came to trust in Christ. His home is secular, but set in a family and city that are deeply influenced by "serious" Islam. Indeed that is where he began his spiritual search. But Jesus, when he heard about him and prayed, cleaned him out from bad habits that he had no control over. His mother and grandmother slowly noticed the change and have accepted his faith. But the father whom he admires so much refuses to speak to him. He will not swallow the change, and waits for his 'return' to Islam to welcome him into the family once again. It is hard for both Father and son.

Christopher's sister was very ill last year. The family tried several doctors, and also consulted the folk healers who in North Africa, work under the name of Islam. Christopher told his sister that Jesus is able to heal disease. He went into his room to pray; there he faced his doubts, and broke through them. Later in the night he received the assurance that his sister was healed. Early the next day he knocked on the door and told her 'Jesus has healed you'. That day her energy returned, and she has been well for ten months already. It was the month of fasting, and over the sole of the day, their Father asked why she was so much better. She said 'Jesus healed me when Christopher prayed'.

His father no longer speaks against faith in Jesus. Christopher continually prays for him to become a follower of the Messiah.

In the country that has adopted us, we need the healing power of Jesus. He will manifest Himself to people who do not yet know Him.

Recently, we prayed for a family where only the Father does not believe in Jesus. We had the assurance that if this man receives the truth that Jesus is the only Saviour, then through encountering Him, he would change immediately from a Saul to a Paul. He might become the hungriest and thirstiest member of the whole family, longing for more of Jesus. In Christ, everything is possible.

In prayer, with love we believe that many people will leave the dark cover that shrouds the nations; they will come to the light, because the curtain has already been torn from top to bottom.



Ecumenically speaking

To mark the start of Advent the churches of Versailles organised a procession starting at the church of Notre Dame in the Rue de la Paroisse, stopping at the (Protestant) Temple in Rue Hoche and finishing up at Saint Mark's. At each stop there was a short time of prayer, readings and praise. Some walkers fell by the wayside, but around 40 made it to the finishing post. At Saint Mark's in addition to the worship there was mulled wine and cakes to warm up bodies and souls.

The next ecumenical event will be at 21h30 on Wednesday 21st January 2009 (during the Week of Christian Unity) and will take the form of a "Veillée de Prière" hosted by the Diaconesses de Reuilly¹, 10 rue de la Porte de Buc (near Versailles Chantiers station).

¹The Diaconesses de Reuilly or "Communauté des Diaconesses de Reuilly" are a protestant order with a strong ecumenical vocation. They have seven centres in France, Norway and Cameroon. Some 20 sisters live and work at the Head Office – sorry, Maison Mère – in Versailles.

News from St Paul's

We welcome Elaine Labourel as Assistant Chaplain with responsibility for St Paul's. With her husband Hervé and daughters Victoria and Alexandra, Elaine has made a very timely and happy addition to the St Paul's family.

A World Away – a letter from the Thai-Burma border.



I am a world away from the red and gold leaf-lined streets of Versailles, as I cycle every day through the luscious green that overwhelms every mental photograph I take, watched over by the multi-shaded surrounding hills. I can't quite turn yet turn all these soul-reaching sights into a routine. I've found new motivation in waking up early to make the most of the night's healing coolness, sitting in my bed reading through Isaiah and writing prayers, asking God to give me the strength to smile all day and the resources to plan efficient lessons. I make my way across town on my very creaky bicycle, smiles and "hello!" paving my way, as I meander through the market where pungent and wonderful smells fill my nostrils and head.

I avoid two or three close collisions, and arrive at what appears to be a tiny road-side shop, no different from any of the others that line the street and all those around it. I smile and bow my head as I make my way through the shop, still not quite sure what language I'm supposed to talk in this town. At the back of the shop, a smell, not unlike compost on the hottest French day would smell, greets me faithfully, and I begin my steady climb of the steps, avoiding 200 pairs of tiny flip flops, repeating "hello, hello, hello" to every passing grinning face, trying very hard to make my smile grow bigger every time. After the first floor or two, the smell gives up trying to follow me around and I become more aware of the sweat dripping down my back and legs. I climb over two unfinished walls on the would-be roof, and make my triumphant arrival into my classroom, feeling very much like an exhausted pigeon making a crash landing. This, however, is the very beginning of my day.

If there is one thing I have realized in the past month, it's that we have so much potential, and that it's God-given. If you are feeling in any way dissatisfied or restless, it is because you are overflowing with the energy and yearning God set in you when he fearfully and wonderfully created you, as he already had in mind all the great times He and you were going to have together. I've also realized why we get so lost, especially as teenagers, trying to spend this potential somewhere. I spend myself physically and mentally every day, and it would be unhealthy folly to do it in my strength. I know whose plan it is, who holds the responsibility for success or failure, who takes on the stress of my future, who paid for the slip-ups of my past, and it is also He who is the only one who can bring my life to its full potential, as much here as in France or anywhere in the world.

And all this is the grace God has given to me. I was brought up and spoilt by love, education and comfort, yet I was allowed to escape part of the curse of being rich and material-bound, and was allowed to be included in the lives of these people who live a lot closer to the truth than most people who try. To quote Aung San Suu Kyi, "When people have been stripped of all their material supports, there only remain to sustain them the values of their cultural and spiritual inheritance."

A tradition of sharing installed by age-old beliefs in the joy of giving and the sanctity of compassion will move a homeless destitute to press a portion of his meagre ration on strangers with all the grace and delight of one who has ample riches to dispense." Those of you who have worked in Operation Stephen may have noticed the truth in this statement, I know I did in the market place in Versailles, and I have done in the market here. These people have learnt to place their treasure in a place that cannot be bankrupt as easily as an unstable economy, and in so doing they are, usually unknowingly, living a lot closer to Scripture than we who try. When Jesus told us to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, speak for the voiceless, we fell into the error of believing the people we help get the most out of the deal. I can't ever stress this point enough: just do it, and you will see just how much you receive. Isaiah 58.

Claire Simmons

A Way to Respond ...



Back in August 2008 I found myself writing to a friend, "Whoopee, I haven't heard the "O" word yet today!" I shocked myself that I was feeling negative about the Olympics; how very unsporting of me, how could I feel that way? Part of my cynicism was because China had been chosen as the host nation in spite of its human rights policies, its involvement in Tibet and - most of all for me personally - its support of the military regime in Burma. Why did these things not matter to the committee that made the choice?

Most of us feel "compassion over-load " as we watch the news, there are so many troubled areas, so much cruelty and so many victims of evil and natural disaster. We feel helpless. What can I do that could possibly make a difference? Where do I find more compassion? Are THEY after more of MY money? Maybe there is another side to this story and the people I see on my TV screen have done something wrong and they are NOT innocent victims (who is??). We don't fully understand the politics or the culture. Then maybe we feel guilt that we still haven't written a letter to our MP about the last event which struck us.

On a much deeper level maybe this all knocks away at our faith, our ability to trust God, to believe in the power of prayer. Has He got the whole world in His hands? Can we continue to trust Him? I've got enough to cope with in my own life without feeling responsible for someone else. What is the point of praying about the school my child will go to if God doesn't answer their prayer for food or justice? What a maelstrom! Retreat, cynicism and denial are very attractive options at this point, let's not judge.... What can I do to make myself feel less guilty/challenged and more comfortable? *continued overleaf*

Back in 2000 I was privileged to meet an individual who gave me a way to respond. A young journalist in Hong Kong at the time and member of our church, Ben Rogers had started the Hong Kong branch of Christian Solidarity Worldwide and had taken the challenge to be a voice for the voiceless. I decided that even though I couldn't cope with understanding all the world's problems, I could find out about one area, I could do something for one situation. I knew nothing about Burma but it was not too far away and I was excited by the thought of it. Amazingly I was given the opportunity almost immediately to join a visit with Christian Solidarity Worldwide members from UK, US and Australia and people who really knew what they were talking about: Baroness Caroline Cox, Dr Martin Panter and James Mawdsley.

What a privilege! I met some of the lovely Karen people and like many I was won over by them, their grace, charm, kindness, lack of aggression or desire for revenge, their continuing faith in adversity. The Karen are an ancient tribe who had largely turned to Christianity, given support to the allies during WWII and been promised by Britain



that they could return to their own land, a promise that proved empty. In the post-war desire for peace and end to conflict, Britain walked away from a trusted and trusting friend. It was the end of the war for Britain but not for the Burmese. The persecution of minority tribes and the house arrest of democratically elected leader Aung Sun Suu Kyi followed. Once I found out a little bit of what is going on there I was shocked by the

level of cruelty that one people can show to another. The regime's burning desire to eradicate the Karen, Karenni, Chin and other tribes from Burma is resulting in dreadful atrocities: appalling cruelties, child soldiers, child porters, rape, murder, burning, driving families into the jungle, into hiding and further and further away from home. The only safe places to go are across the borders in to refugee camps. Along the Thai border for example there are large camps housing thousands and thousands. How long will they be there for, another



twenty years? I heard first hand stories from children who had fled attacks, seen their parents murdered, travelled days or weeks through the jungle fearing the military to the safety, but partial imprisonment, of the camps.

Since 2001 I have visited a further three times, I made a promise on my first visit that I would use every opportunity to tell people about Burma, they feel forgotten by the world. In 2002 I took three of my sons to visit, the youngest was then 8. I wanted them to engage with Christian brothers and sisters in a different situation and two of them returned a year later by their own choice. These Karen really are a winsome people!

Christian Solidarity Worldwide Hong Kong, inspired, as I was, by Ben Rogers, has continued to visit and advocate. Teams comprised of CSW supporters from various churches visit each year and weekly prayer requests are emailed to those who are interested. Our church, St Andrew's Kowloon in Hong Kong, has played a part in this and given their support.



Now I have moved to France so I have fresh opportunities to tell people about Burma. St Mark's Church, Versailles has embraced our family's interest in Burma. They have come to hear Ben Rogers talk, have had "Burma meals" and raised money for organisations such as Partners and also to support a further visit. Last year I took a young lady of 17 who has a heart for injustice to Chiang Mai (Thailand) and to the Burmese border. She met an elderly Karen leader who was assassinated just a few months later on the porch we had stood on. She met monks, disaffected soldiers, children, pastors, mothers and orphans. Subsequently she has chosen to study International Relations and Human rights at university and she will return to the border area to teach and help in her Gap year. She has become a voice for the voiceless.

This year I had hoped to take a team of our youth to visit for a week but sadly the military situation has made that visit not feasible, so a married couple are going instead and taking our support. However the young people have had their eyes opened and their hearts have responded.

The start of the 2008 Olympics coincided with the Day of Prayer for Burma - a day to think about China and its support of a cruel and wicked regime as it bathed in its own glory. The Olympic Bird's Nest stadium seems to me to be a Tangled Web of Deception.



For more information please go to : www.csw.org.hk

Clare Kenchington

Pastors Past

David and Sue Vail (1977-1982) and David and Angela Marshall (1992-2004) look back on the highlights of their years in Versailles



David and Sue in 1982

David Vail writes: "We hit the track running" is the phrase which best describes our first day in France, 11th October 1977! We were met at Gare du Nord by the Chaplain Alan Lindsay and his wife Catherine. The latter loaded Sue and all our luggage into their famous blue and white V.W. Camper Van and drove off anxiously onto the busy Périphérique! Alan took me to a Clergy Fraternal. We survived.....but our "culture shock" was more acute than for some! Getting used to France after all the years we had had in Africa was not easy. My school-boy French, learnt in Nairobi, was hair-raising, but I remember it came in useful on one occasion when we were stopped for speeding. After listening to my garbled explanation, the kind gendarme waved me on with a classic Gallic shrug of the shoulders and a "les Anglais"! Seriously, though, we could not have had a richer or more fulfilling time than the 4 ½ years we had at St Mark's. In 1978 I.C.S. took the bold decision to support two chaplaincies instead of just one. I was asked, therefore, to take over at Versailles and build on the strong foundations so carefully laid by the Lindsay's. They concentrated on the work at Maisons Laffitte. We found a wonderful team of helpers at "little" St Mark's church in rue Peintre Lebrun, and it was soon realised that we needed more accommodation for the growing congregation. In 1980, thanks to the kind invitation of the Bishop of Versailles, we were allowed to use the beautiful chapel and facilities at the Chapelle de Grandchamp. Sue and her team of willing helpers built up the Sunday School groups and the first of the weekends away for teenagers took place at Houlgate. "Pot-luck" lunches took place regularly in the refectory at Grandchamp and there was a growing sense of unity and purpose as we sought to reach out to English speaking ex-pats in Yvelines. So the St Mark's Family was ready for the next step when, in May 1982, I became Gen. Secretary of the Rwanda Mission C.M.S. and Jonathan Wilmot was appointed in my place. The exciting move to Pont Colbert followed, as the Lord led step by step in his plans for St Mark's.



Most present-day members of Saint Mark's will recognise the black-bearded gentleman as Mike Hudson; some of the more senior members may also be able to pick out Ian and Celia Perry and an incredibly young-looking Mike Dimsdale.

His gracious plans, for us, have also continued – Rwanda mission; Vicar of Christ Church, Virginia Water; and, since retirement in September 1996, seven contrasting locums in places as different from each other as the Falkland's or Corfu, but each the same as we met the lovely Christian congregations. Truly the Lord's work is continuing worldwide – to Him be all the praise!

PS - David recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination. He was ordained in Liverpool on the 29th September 1958 – Michaelmas Day. Please join with us in praise and thanksgiving for all the Lord's goodness.



David pictured with his wife Angela

David Marshall reminisces: The twelve years we spent at Versailles were some of the happiest and most exciting we have spent so far in 32 years of ministry! Highlights and memories are many and so it is quite difficult to pick out just a few.

Obviously the building project figured large in those years and indeed the bulldozers moved in within our first few weeks! But who can forget the excitement of seeing the first phase go up! And the incredible way in which Phase 2 came about....do you remember? We had decided at Council to proceed even though we didn't have all the money we needed. The very next day I took a 'phone call promising us a gift of £100,000! The meeting I was in stopped as I fell off my perch! Due to the generosity of that ex-member we were able to proceed and even include some modifications to the original plan.

But church is really about people. I still marvel at all the different nations represented at St Mark's and the varieties of Christian background from which people came. Individuals and families...faces suddenly appear in my mind and with the image some of their stories. I loved the way in which some came to us relatively uncertain about Christian things; simply wanting to be part of the English speaking community. Then to watch them open up to the Gospel, become Christians and start to follow Jesus more seriously. Those were the highlights for me.

There were many good and funny times about our stay in Versailles. The saga of the blocked toilet! Cups of coffee and laughter in the office on a Friday; Troy our dog (too many stories to tell there! Ask the editor!!) Mickey Dance hanging socks on the line, dressed as a shepherd at Bethlehem when a police helicopter flew over..."It's a Roman patrol" he said.

continued overleaf

Memorable moments....blessing the Pope in Evry Cathedral 1998!! Houlgate Pentecost Weekends with some impressive speakers. Trying to explain Anglicanism to an assembled gathering of Catholic priests at St Louis Cathedral over lunch! My friend Albert le caviste just down the street. Frédérique dealing expertly with some difficult companies, The Christmas Carol Service with the theme of peace where we showed some video clips and I hadn't really thought hard about it and so included Henry V, Waterloo and the Battle of Britain. Walks led by the Warrens...pot luck lunches and barbecues...the wine cave in the Chaplaincy House! So many good times to remember in a wonderful Christian family.

So what are we doing now? After a brief unhappy sojourn in Bury St Edmunds we came to Collier Row Romford last year. David has been licensed as Priest-in Charge and Angela as Hon Assistant Minister. It is a big busy parish with two churches, but only one congregation. We minister in all sorts of ways to our local community and have great fun in church. There is a sense of expectancy; we believe that the Lord is going to do great things in this area and we've already witnessed a steady growth in numbers. It takes a while to adjust back to life in England; I still have to remember not to 'phone somebody at 'teatime' when we might be eating later. But as much as we miss France, we know we are where the Lord wants us to be and hope to stay here until retirement when we will take up permanent residence at Sous le Figuier.

Darwin vs. Genesis - the last word!

One day a little girl asked her mother: 'Mummy, where did the human race come from?'

Her mother answered: 'A long time ago, God made Adam and Eve. They had children and that's how the human race started'.

A couple of days later the little girl asked her father the same question.

Her father replied: 'A very long time ago there were monkeys and over the years they have transformed themselves into men. And that's how the human race came into being.'

Confused, the little girl turned to her mother and asked:

'Mummy how is it that you told me that God created us and Daddy says that we come from monkeys?'

'Darling, replied her mother, it's simple! I was speaking of where my family come from and your father was telling you about his!'

Christmas is coming!



For those who were there, Sunday 14th December 2008 at Saint Mark's was a day to remember! In the morning the children who had been rehearsing hard presented their Nativity Play, with trumpet accompaniment by Alexander Waldron. Thanks to Catherine Fourel and Sarah Waldron and their helpers for making this such a success.

The play was followed by a lunch and then by a Christmas Market which extended before and after the evening Carol Service. Vanessa Norman and her helpers did a wonderful job in organising both the market and the lunch.



For the Carol Service, Dilys Barré was as always an inspiring conductor, and our thanks go to her, the choir, the pianist Tatiana Gubanova-Anakina, and the trumpeter Antoine Rollet, not forgetting Christina Galley who worked overtime to get everything (and everybody) together. The church was less full than usual for the carol service, due to the addition of the morning "Nativity" service, which meant we could get at the mince pies and mulled wine without the usual crush in the upstairs foyer!



Our Christmas worship at St Mark's will continue with "Carols under the Stars" on December 19th, then a Midnight Communion starting at 23h30 on Christmas Eve and Family Communion on Christmas Day at 10h30.

At Saint Paul's Chevry there will be a Carol Service on Sunday 21st December at 17h30.

Sounds familiar?



Fred! They're even bringing religion into Christmas now. 'The indignant housewife dragged her husband towards a Christian bookshop, crammed between Toys R Us and a Supersave. The cards on display had no jolly Santas sleighing through snowdrifts shouting ho-ho-ho. Strains of 'Silent Night' floated into the crowded High Street.

The woman sniffed in disgust and marched into the Supersave. "Jingle bells" and an overweight Santa smelling of beer greeted her.

'Ahhhhh. That's more like it' she beamed. Sharon and little Darren would love this Fred. Let's ask our Gary if we can bring 'em next Saturday.'

'Yeah sure. Anything you say Doris,' her husband replied his eyes glued to a news stand highlighting the sports results. Doris' eyes latched onto a display of gaudy jewellery.

'Fred, she cooed, holding up a 'diamond' cross surrounded by highly coloured stones set in a circle the size of a frying pan. How's this for our Avril's wedding, now that that snooty vicar has agreed to marry her. Who does he think he is? Just because we don't go to church indeed! That's what he's paid for isn't it?

Fred nodded disinterestedly, his eyes turned towards the racing results.

'The bridesmaids'll be wearing rainbow dresses. That cross thing on a silver chain'll look lovely with her low cut dress.' She sniffed again. 'Expect that stuck-up vicar'll object to that. Well, just too bad.'

'I'll take it, she announced imperiously to the hovering assistant. And mind you put it in a posh velvet box.'

'Certainly Madame,' the salesgirl replied.

'I should think so too at that price,' Doris ended haughtily. We'll put it under the tree Fred and give it to her after the turkey. Now don't let me forget to buy the stuffing. They make a lovely one in packets here. And we need new lights for the tree and more decorations. I don't want that Mrs. Nextdoor lording it over us again saying her front room window looked better than ours.'

Taking her long-suffering husband's arm she dragged him towards the lift.

'Stop drooling Fred, she grouched. We've still got to get something for your Auntie Flo She didn't like that reindeer cushion we gave 'er last year. Never stopped grumbling.'

She had another sniff.

'Your family!!! I'll be glad when Christmas is over. Can't stand much more of that Salvation Army Band playing 'Hark the herald' and passing the hat round. Do they think we're made of money? Spend enough as it is what with the cards, the presents, the turkey and Grandma grousing if we don't buy a Marks and Sparks pud. I tell you I'm fair worn out with it all.....'

"Jingle bells" had now changed to Bing Crosby crooning "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas." Doris smiled in satisfaction. 'Now that's what I call music, she purred. 'That's what Christmas is all about.'



But is it?

It's a scenario enacted annually in every crowded shopping centre where Father Christmas' going in opposite directions collide, leaving bewildered children wondering which to approach to make sure their ten page list of indispensable toys arrive. And harassed housewives rush madly round declaring they'll never be ready in time. They can't find a present for Uncle Bert. The dog keeps knocking over the tree. And Tesco's have run out of nuts.'

How many people remember the real meaning of Christmas?

Not many.

Not many people accepted Jesus when he was here. Men fought and killed each other in his name when he was gone. We who go to church are "weirdos".

For most people Christmas is just another excuse for a slap up celebration, with plenty of booze.

We've let our Saviour down haven't we? So..... isn't it up to us to bring them back?

Have you ever thought what would have happened had Jesus been born in the year 2000? To a young girl about to be married suddenly told by an angel that she is pregnant? She'd have rushed to the Family Planning Clinic or the school nurse, who would have immediately solved her problem and ...

...Jesus would never have been born.

He'd have been aborted.

Happy Christmas!



Noreen Riols

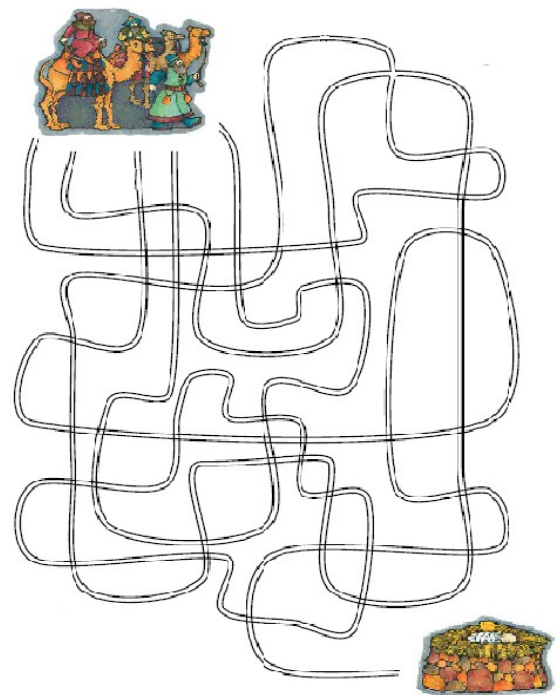
CHRISTMAS FUN ★ CHRISTMAS FUN ★ CHRISTMAS FUN

Christmas Wordsearch : Find the words in the grid. The unused letters will spell a name given to Christ meaning "God with us."

D	I	M	E	S	N	E	C	N	I	K	N	A	R	F
L	A	J	N	E	L	B	A	T	S	T	R	A	W	W
O	N	E	N	M	A	B	A	B	Y	R	A	M	N	I
G	G	S	I	N	G	U	D	O	N	K	E	Y	I	S
I	E	U	E	L	H	P	E	S	O	J	S	R	G	E
F	L	S	A	M	T	S	I	R	H	C	T	R	A	M
T	S	B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	A	H	M	E
S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S	D	O	R	E	H	N

- | | | | | | |
|-----------|--------------|-------|--------|-----------|----------|
| Angels | Donkey | Herod | Joseph | Myrrh | Stable |
| Baby | Frankincense | Inn | Magi | Shepherds | Star |
| Bethlehem | Gifts | Jesus | Mary | Sing | Straw |
| Christmas | Gold | | | | Wise men |

A six-year-old boy was asked to give thanks before Christmas dinner. The family members bowed their heads in expectation. He began his prayer, thanking God for all his family, naming them one by one. He thanked God for Mummy, Daddy, brother, sister, Grandma, Grandpa, and all his aunts and uncles. Then he began to thank God for the food. He gave thanks for the turkey, the pudding, the roast potatoes, the carrots, the mince pies, even the gravy. Then he paused, and everyone waited ... After a long silence, the lad looked up at his mother and whispered: "If I thank God for the sprouts, won't he know that I'm lying?"



Which route takes the Wise Men to Jesus?

CHRISTMAS FUN ★ CHRISTMAS FUN ★ CHRISTMAS FUN

CHRISTMAS FUN ★ CHRISTMAS FUN ★ CHRISTMAS FUN

Christmas Cryptogram : See if you can work out the first two lines of this favourite Christmas Carol. We have given you one letter to get you started.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
							25																		

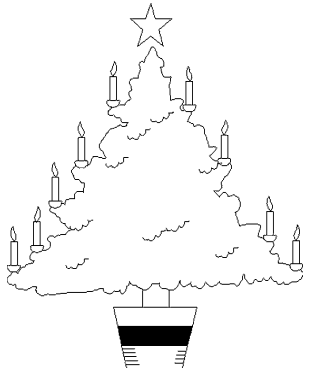
H _ _ _ _ H _ H _ _ _ _
 25 8 7 18 10 25 5 25 5 7 8 19 9 8 21 11 5 19 16

 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ H _
 16 12 21 11 11 19 24 7 15 10 24 10 25 5

 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
 21 5 4 13 24 7 21 18 12 21 11 6 5 8 20 5 24 21

 _ _ _ H _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
 5 8 7 10 25 8 21 9 2 5 7 20 15 2 12 19 9 11 24 9

 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ !
 8 21 9 16 12 21 21 5 7 16 7 5 20 24 21 20 12 19 5 9



Question :
 What is the difference between the Christmas alphabet and the ordinary alphabet?

Answer :
 The Christmas alphabet has Noël!!

Knock Knock
 - Who's there ?
 Oakham
 - Oakham who ?
 Oakham all ye faithfull... !

CHRISTMAS COLOURING



And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Luke 2:16

CHRISTMAS FUN ★ CHRISTMAS FUN ★ CHRISTMAS FUN

Through the eyes of a child.

Laughing is good for the health! A child was told to write a book report on the entire Bible. This is amazing and brought tears to my eyes. I wonder how often we take for granted that children understand what we are teaching?

The Children's Bible in a Nutshell.

In the beginning, which occurred near the start, there was nothing but God, darkness, and some gas. The Bible says, 'The Lord thy God is one, but I think He must be a lot older than that. Anyway, God said, 'Give me a light!' and someone did. Then God made the world.

He split the Adam and made Eve. Adam and Eve were naked, but they weren't embarrassed because mirrors hadn't been invented yet. Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating one bad apple, so they were driven from the Garden of Eden. Not sure what they were driven in though, because they didn't have cars.

Adam and Eve had a son, Cain, who hated his brother as long as he was Abel. Pretty soon all of the early people died off, except for Methuselah, who lived to be like a million or something.

One of the next important people was Noah, who was a good guy, but one of his kids was kind of a Ham. Noah built a large boat and put his family and some animals on it. He asked some other people to join him, but they said they would have to take a rain check.

After Noah came Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jacob was more famous than His brother, Esau, because Esau sold Jacob his birthmark in exchange for some pot roast. Jacob had a son named Joseph who wore a really loud sports coat.

Another important Bible guy is Moses, whose real name was Charlton Heston. Moses led the Israel Lights out of Egypt and away from the evil Pharaoh after God sent ten plagues on Pharaoh's people. These plagues included frogs, mice, lice, bowels, and no cable. God fed the Israel Lights every day with manicotti. Then he gave them His Top ten Commandments. These include don't lie, cheat, smoke, dance, or covet your neighbor's stuff. Oh, yeah, I just thought of one more: Humor thy father and thy mother.

One of Moses' best helpers was Joshua who was the first Bible guy to use spies. Joshua fought the battle of Geritol and the fence fell over on the town.

After Joshua came David. He got to be king by killing a giant with a slingshot. He had a son named Solomon who had about 300 wives and 500 porcupines. My teacher says he was wise, but that doesn't sound very wise to me.

After Solomon there were a bunch of major league prophets. One of these was Jonah, who was swallowed by a big whale and then barfed upon the shore. There were also some minor league prophets, but I guess we don't have to worry about them.

After the Old Testament came the New Testament. Jesus is the star of The New Testament. He was born in Bethlehem in a barn. During His life, Jesus had many arguments with sinners like the Pharisees and the Republicans. Jesus also had twelve opossoms. The worst one was Judas Asparagus. Judas was so evil that they named a terrible vegetable after him.

Jesus was a great man. He healed many leopards and even preached to some Germans on the Mount. But the Republicans and all those guys put Jesus on trial before Pontius the Pilot. Pilot didn't stick up for Jesus. He just washed his hands instead.

Anyway's, Jesus died for our sins, then came back to life again. He went up to Heaven but will be back at the end of the Aluminum. His return is foretold in the book of Revolution.

Test your knowledge!

The following questions and answers were collected from last year's GCSE exam results in Swindon, Wiltshire. They are genuine responses (from 16 year olds)!

Geography

Q: Name the four seasons.

A: Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q: Explain one of the processes by which water can be made safe to drink.

A: Flirtation makes water safe to drink because it removes large pollutant like grit, sand, dead sheep and canoeists.

Q: What causes the tides in the oceans?

A: The tides are a fight between the Earth and the Moon. All water tends to flow towards the moon, because there is no water on the moon, and Nature abhors a vacuum. I forget where the sun joins in this fight.

Sociology

Q: What guarantees may a mortgage company insist on?

A: If you are buying a house, they will insist you are well endowed.

Q: What are steroids?

A: Things for keeping carpets still on the stairs.

Biology

Q: What happens to your body as you age?

A: When you get old, so do your bowels and you get intercontinental.

Q: Name a major disease associated with cigarettes.

A: Premature death.

Q: What is the Fibula?

A: A small lie.

Q: Give the meaning of the term "Caesarean Section."

A: The caesarean section is a district in Rome.

Q: Give an example of a fungus. What is a characteristic feature?

A: Mushrooms. They always grow in damp places and they look like umbrellas.

English

Q: Use the word "judicious" in a sentence to show you understand its meaning.

A: Hands that judicious can be soft as your face.

Q: What does the word "benign" mean?

A: Benign is what you will be after you be eight.

St Mark's Anglican Church, Versailles
In the Diocese of Europe
founded in 1814

St Mark's is a self-financing chaplaincy working in partnership with:
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“Our God is able to do abundantly more....”

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Administrator:	Christina Galley	01 39 02 79 45
	Kevin Bodsworth	01 30 95 84 49
Youth Worker:	Nathan Lambert	06 88 35 51 97
Children's Programme Coordinator:	Catherine Fourel	01 30 24 79 15
Evangelism Coordinator:	Kevin Bodsworth	01 30 95 84 49
Music Ministry:	Paul Kenchington	01 39 02 79 45
Churchwardens:	Dominique Grelet	01 39 02 27 49
	Maggie Simmons	01 41 15 01 99
Deputy wardens:	Anne-Marie Laidet, Karen Thorley, Neal Cotton	
Lay Assistants:	Buki Kogbe, Gareth Lewis, Clare Kenchington, David Logan, Barry Saunders, William Morris	
Church Council:	John Ferrero, Catherine Fourel, Dominique Grelet, David Logan, Prisca Wiles, Ian Wray	

Archdeaconry Synod Representative: Allison Pineau, Jim Watkins

Worship:

St Mark's	9.00am	1st Sunday	Holy Communion (BCP)
	10.30am	1 st Sunday	Morning Worship (CW)
		2 nd & 4 th Sundays	Holy Communion (CW)
		3 rd Sunday	All-Age Family Worship
		5 th Sunday	Praise & Prayer
5.30 pm		Evening service	
St Paul's Chevry	5.30 pm	1 st , 3 rd & 5 th Sundays	Holy Communion (CW)
		2 nd & 4 th Sundays	Evening Prayer (CW)

Association Culturelle Déclarée (d'après la loi de 1905)